LEVEL(S): BRINGING BUILDINGS INTO THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Our built environment plays a central role in addressing today's most pressing issues. From the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement, to helping Europe achieve the vision set out in its Circular Economy Action Plan. It will be impossible to meet these goals unless we release the vast potential in the construction and real estate sectors.

This is why the European Commission has developed Level(s); a reporting framework to improve the sustainability of buildings. Level(s) provides a set of common indicators and metrics for measuring the environmental performance of office and residential buildings, which takes into account their full lifecycle impacts. It is currently in its test phase, and its ambition is to create a 'common European language' for sustainable buildings, that can help galvanize debate and direct action - as Europe has done on the energy performance of buildings.

It focuses attention on six key areas: greenhouse gas emissions, resource efficiency, water use, health and comfort, resilience and adaptation, and cost and value. It will ensure that action taken at an individual building level makes a measurable impact on critical issues for all nations such as climate change, circular economy, climate adaptation and health.

Hundreds of leading organisations from across Europe have been involved in the design of Level(s). A lot of them are now involved in its testing phase to ensure that Level(s) is the robust foundation we need to support Europe in delivering a sustainable built environment - and a world leading construction and real estate sector.

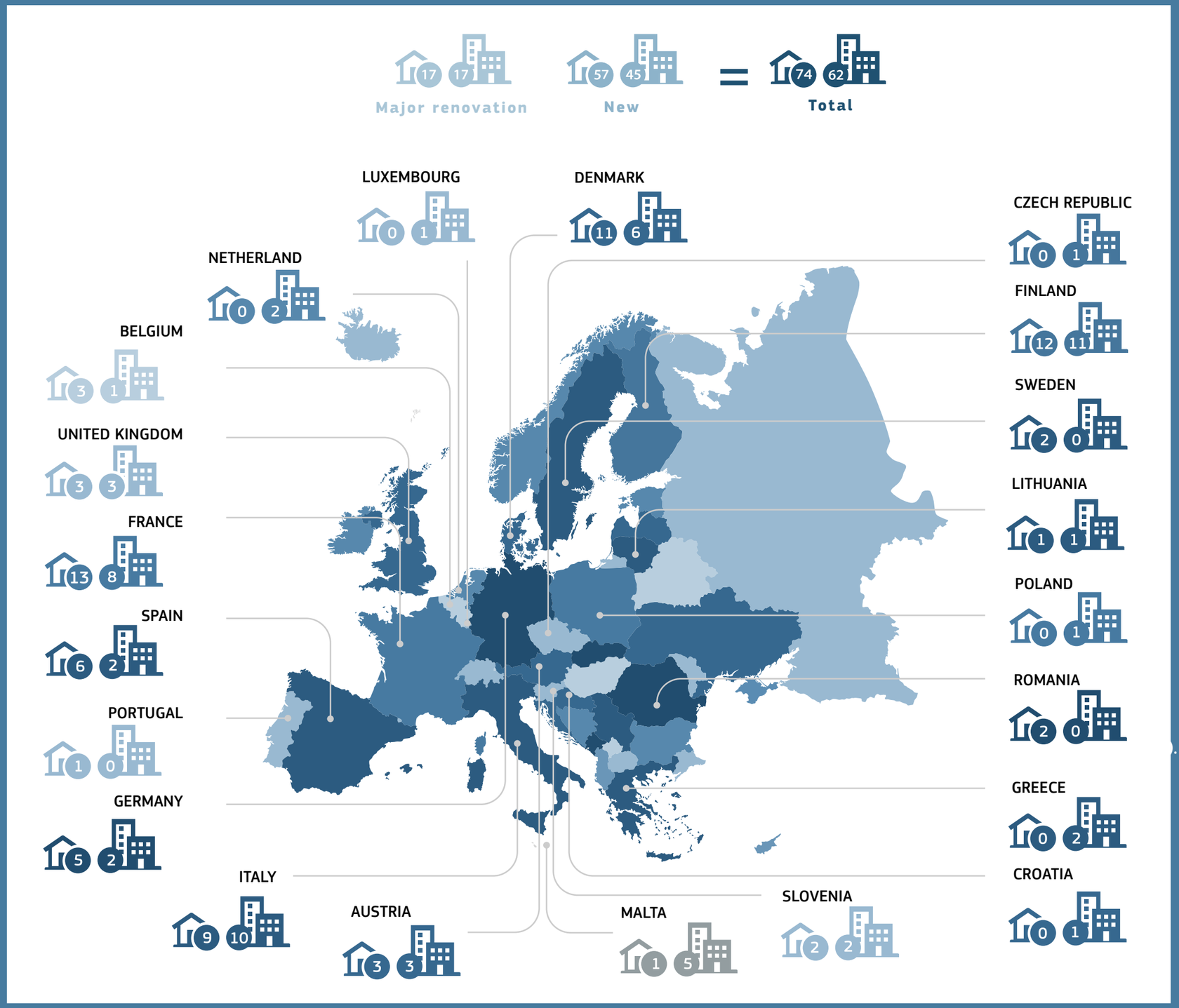
LEVEL(S): A COMMUNITY OF MORE THAN 130 BUILDING PROJECTS IN 21 NATIONS

In April 2018, the European Commission officially opened the two-year testing phase for Level(s) to organisations looking to be part of Europe's shift towards circular and lifecycle thinking.

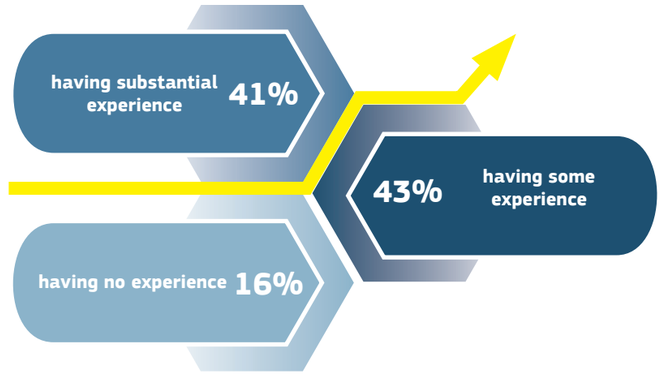
The aim of the testing phase is to support stakeholders across the construction and real estate value chain, from investors, to developers, designers and manufacturers; in testing the Level(s) indicators on their building projects. The feedback from the testing phase will inform the final version of the Level(s) framework - to be launched in spring 2020.

LEVEL(S): OVERVIEW OF THE TESTING PHASE

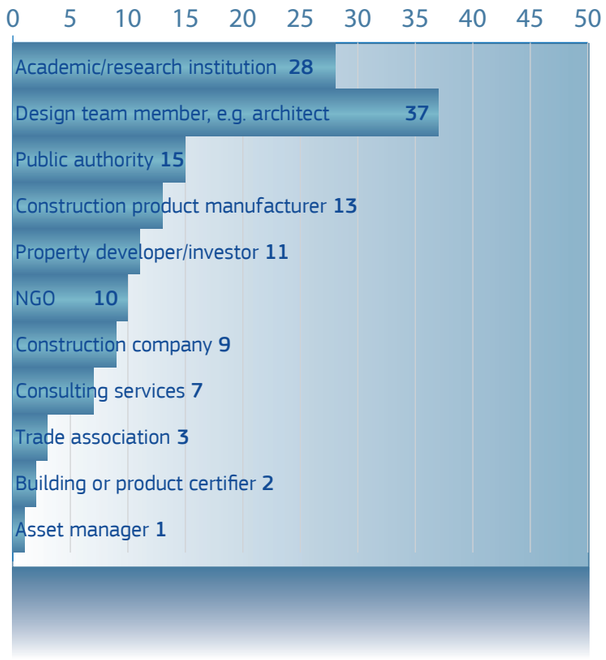
Of the projects testing Level(s), 74 are residential and 62 are non-residential - which provides important balance in terms of the community shaping Level(s).



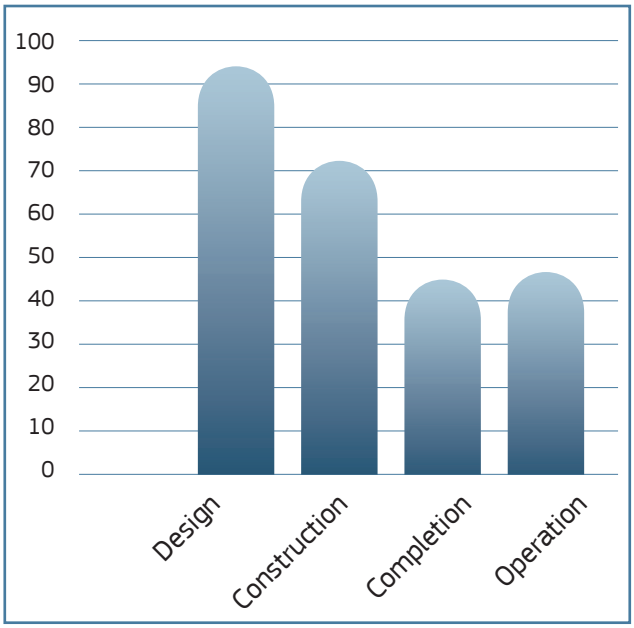
The experience with sustainable building rating tools or lifecycle assessment varies between the organisations testing Level(s)



The type of organisations leading Level(s) testing projects moreover varies across the construction and real estate value chain.



Participants testing Level(s) have the opportunity to apply the framework at different stages of the building lifecycle, with some of the organisations testing it on more than one stage. Testing it at design stage is the most popular, followed by construction stage.



LEVEL(S): KEY ISSUES FOR DEVELOPMENT

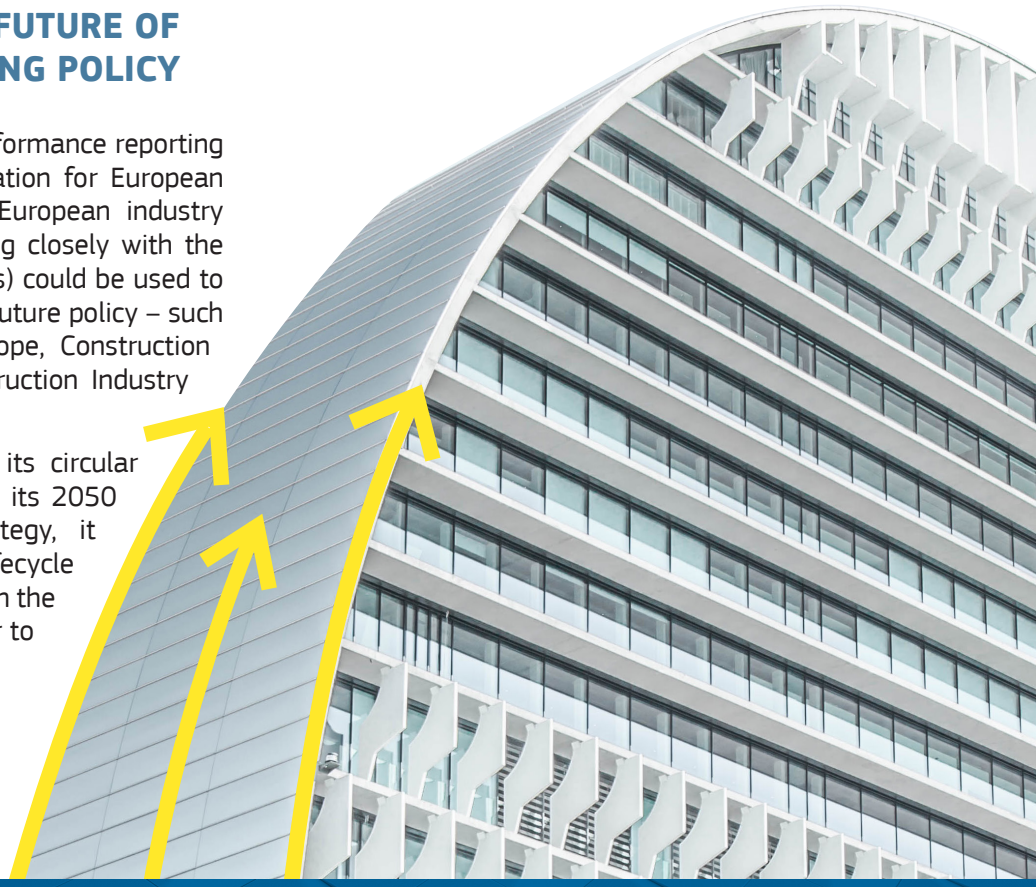
A key aim of the testing phase is to hear from testers on the challenges associated with testing Level(s). Some of the key issues that need to be tackled in 2019 ahead of Level(s) full launch in 2020 include:

- What further support is needed from the European Commission to ensure Level(s) is accessible, even for those with little or no experience in this field.
- They type of tools and software need to support lifecycle performance reporting, and eventually the data infrastructure to support benchmarking.
- The barriers to mainstreaming Level(s) across Europe, and understanding the role of different actors in optimising sustainable building performance.

LEVEL(S): SHAPING THE FUTURE OF EU SUSTAINABLE BUILDING POLICY

Level(s) is not just a voluntary performance reporting framework - it provides a foundation for European sustainable building policy. Key European industry representatives have been working closely with the Commission to look at how Level(s) could be used to help set out a clear trajectory for future policy – such as the Architects Council of Europe, Construction Products Europe, European Construction Industry Federation, RICS and WorldGBC.

As Europe moves forwards with its circular economy action plan and reviews its 2050 greenhouse gas emissions strategy, it is clear we need to tackle lifecycle emissions and resource efficiency in the construction and real estate sector to meet the Paris Agreement.



To learn more about Level(s) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/buildings.htm