Wood floor laying

Provided it is a sustainable forestry product, wood is in principle a material of high ecological value. Guaranteeing this is one of the aims of the “ÖkoKauf Wien” criteria.

Moreover, floor coverings and the construction chemicals used in floor laying are of essential importance for the indoor air quality. Since the legal requirements pertaining to construction chemicals are totally inadequate in terms of precautionary health and environmental protection, “ÖkoKauf Wien” has set standards for avoiding substances that are harmful to human health and the environment in the flooring installation products and coatings used.

Wood floor laying — requirements

The following notes are based on Criteria Lists 08005 Wood and engineered wood floor coverings, 08006 Products for flooring installation, 08015 Laminate floor coverings and 08016 Surface coatings, and make reference to the services listed in Service Group LG38 Wooden floors, as set out in the specifications for domestic engineering.

Ecological assessment

Wood is a regenerative material and, provided it is a sustainable forestry product, it deserves top quality ratings; these ratings must be reversed if it is the product of non-sustainable forest management (clear-felling, non-sustainable plantation management). This is why “ÖkoKauf Wien” requires proof of origin for the wood fraction, the main purpose being to prevent the use of tropical timber from non-sustainable production. Only sustainable forestry products that have been awarded the FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) seal are exempt from this rule. This is why the so-called FSC seal is required for tropical timber; for non-tropical timber proof must be furnished that it comes from countries subscribing to sustainable forestry, or that it carries the FSC and/or PEFC seal.

Products for flooring installation and coating

Products for flooring installation (levelling compounds, primers, adhesives) must, with very few exceptions, be emission tested. In accordance with “ÖkoKauf Wien” specifications, these products need to meet at least the criteria laid down for class “EC 1 — very low emission” by EMICODE, the voluntary quality association for products for flooring installation. (Recently a premium class — EC 1 PLUS — has been added to this system; this seal guarantees that even stricter environmental and health requirements are being met whenever the required products are available). In coating systems the maximum content of volatile organic compounds permitted by “ÖkoKauf Wien” is 6 % (with high boilers accounting for not more than 2 %); two-component coating systems are admitted in exceptional cases only. In calls for tender, care should be taken to indicate minimum technical requirements, in particular wear ratings, in addition to the ecological criteria.

For further information, see “ÖkoKauf Wien” information sheets “VOCs”, “Wood-based materials” and “Tropical timber”