

SOLIDEO response – July 2021

Letter of response to the "Alert on the exclusion of exotic and boreal wood outside the EU in the specifications of environmental excellence of the Olympic Village" of 14 April 2021

Dear Mr. President

The elements raised in your letter dated April 14, 2021 have caught our attention and have been thoroughly examined by the teams of the Société de livraison des ouvrages olympiques (SOLIDEO). It is with great interest that we take note of your reservations regarding the drafting of our specifications for the real estate operators of the Athletes' Village as well as your arguments in favor of exotic and boreal woods.

SOLIDEO environmental excellence strategy was developed in its first months of existence and validated by the Board of Directors on October 16, 2018. It applies to all Olympic and Paralympic structures under SOLIDEO responsibility, and is based on three main pillars: climate change mitigation through the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, adaptation to climate change through urban comfort by 2050, and the design of the city as a biodiversity support. SOLIDEO is committed to promote a replicable model of the European city of 2030, in line with the major societal and environmental issues presented in your letter.

For the Athletes' Village, the strategy of environmental excellence has been set out in the form of an Environmental Excellence Prescription Book (CPEE), which is applied to all real estate operators in the context of the building rights assignment. This CPEE was presented as part of the consultation launch by SOLIDEO at the International Market for Real Estate Professionals (MIPIM), in March 2019, and then specified during the consultation until the winners were designated in the fall of 2019. As of 2019, the contractual framework for the realization of the Athletes' Village therefore prohibits the use of wood of exotic and boreal origin.

The inclusion of the prohibition of exotic and boreal wood in the specifications is the result, like the drafting of the entire EPC, of an intense phase of reflection and consultations conducted by SOLIDEO to operationalize and guarantee the environmental performance of the Olympic structures. SOLIDEO has surrounded itself with a Scientific Committee, whose members have participated in the development of the specifications based on their various fields of expertise in environmental matters. It has also set up a consultation process with players in the construction industry, and wood in particular, which has enabled rich and constructive exchanges around the different prescriptions relating to the materials used and the methods of their implementation.

The projects for the Olympic facilities are now at a level of progress that does not allow us to go back on the materials. It is in fact on the basis of the CPEE prescriptions that the real estate operators appointed to build the Olympic structures have designed and refined their projects

from 2019 until the building permits are filed in the summer of 2020 and the work begins in the spring of 2021.

More precisely, the recommendations concerning the use of wood as a construction material for the Olympic facilities have been developed following 3 logics:

- A logic of sustainability of supplies.
- A logic of limitation of carbon emissions related to supplies.
- A logic of traceability of supplies.

These led to the development of a set of requirements that were discussed, modified and validated by SOLIDEO and the invited wood industry actors: France Bois 2024, ADIVbois, FCBA and the Strategic Committee of the Wood Industry. Upstream, the prescriptions were discussed and established in the framework of exchanges with the SOLIDEO Scientific Committee and other stakeholders, including the non-governmental organization WWF.

The ban on sourcing exotic or boreal wood from outside the EU is mainly the result of the desire to reduce the carbon impact of the works as much as possible, which was at the heart of the development of the requirements. The SOLIDEO has imposed ambitious carbon budgets on all buildings throughout their life cycle, with the aim of putting the Olympic and Paralympic buildings on a path towards carbon neutrality by 2050, in line with France's commitments in this area.

In terms of construction methods, SOLIDEO has promoted the use of wood wherever it makes sense in terms of the constraints relating to the risk of fire and the reversibility of the structures between the Games and the Legacy. In this context, in addition to the intrinsic carbon weight of the materials, the question of where the materials are sourced and the carbon impact of their transport to the construction site is of significant importance. This reasoning has led SOLIDEO to reinforce its arsenal of prescriptions with objectives such as the prohibition of exotic and boreal wood.

SOLIDEO is aware and has stated on many occasions the importance of wood construction in the context of the ecological transition and the major role of wood from the boreal region in the generalization of wood construction on a global scale, particularly in a logic of locality of supply.

Beyond the requirements imposed on the real estate operators of the Athletes' Village and dating from 2018, SOLIDEO remains generally attentive in the conduct of projects to promote the progression of the entire construction sector towards low-carbon development, in line with France's objectives in this area.

In order to support this process, SOLIDEO has the means to capitalize on its experience in order to leave a legacy of tools for replicating good environmental practices. In the area of wood construction, many actions have already been taken and can be strengthened by sharing them with your entities and all the actors in the sector.

Please accept, Mr. President, the expression of my respectful consideration,

Nicolas Ferrand
Executive General Director