

Feasibility of the Implementation of Soft Landings in Sweden

Should Soft Landings be implemented in the procurement process in Swedish construction?

The purpose of this thesis is to examine how Swedish handovers affect building performance in practice today, to review the Soft Landings framework and its efficacy, as well as analyse its potential as an addition to the Swedish procurement process. The thesis aims to answer research questions through a literature review and a multi-case study to understand its uses and potential implementations, with an additional interview study conducted with industry actors to explore whether it can be implemented in Swedish procurement processes and tackle the problems with discrepancies in delivered building performance in the construction industry.

Several initiatives are underway both on national and international level from both the Swedish government and the European Union regarding energy efficiency, the construction industry is lagging behind, especially with regards to building performance. The difference between projected energy usage and actual energy usage in completed buildings is substantial, with handovers and poor commissioning having been identified as among the main underlying causes.

The results from the literature review show that it is essential that frameworks such as Soft Landings be implemented early in the procurement process along with incentives encouraging use or enforcing it, in order for the involved actors to comply with the guidance provided. The interview study revealed that there is a fragmentation of contracts used to handle handovers today in the Swedish construction industry, causing confusion and a general lack of awareness concerning best practices of the handover process. The participants suggested that it could be beneficial for the construction industry to settle on a standardised approach to handovers, potentially through legislative means, in order to combat poor handovers and the performance gaps. The Soft Landings framework has achieved success in certain areas, however, the framework is unlikely to be applied voluntarily by the construction industry as long as low cost is the traditional procurement method considered during tendering. Additional costs associated with Soft Landings, although small, make it unattractive for clients to factor it into a procurement, and unattractive for entrepreneurs to include it in their tenders. Soft Landings does have the potential to deal with the performance gap in Sweden, but it needs to either evolve, involving contractual obligations or liabilities, or be implemented through regulatory means as has been the case in the UK through the Government Construction Strategy of 2016. If Soft Landings is to be implemented early in the Swedish procurement process, it needs to be complemented with regulatory liabilities or contractual obligations.