From Green Buildings to a Sustainable Real Estate Industry – Assessing five years of ÖGNI

Gunther Maier, Sabine Sedlacek, Philipp Kaufmann
The authors

- Gunther Maier
  - WU, Vienna University of Economics and Business, Vienna Austria
  - Co-founder of OGNI
- Sabine Sedlacek
  - MODUL University, Vienna, Austria
  - Project leader: OGNI evaluation project
- Philipp Kaufmann
  - President of OGNI
  - Co-founder of OGNI
Who is OGNI?

- OGNI is „Österreichische Gesellschaft für Nachhaltige Immobilienwirtschaft“
- OGNI is the „Austrian Green Building Council“
- OGNI is a major force for sustainability in the Austrian real estate industry and in CEE countries
- OGNI is partner of DGNB (Germany) and applies the DGNB standard for certification
When and how did OGNI start?

- In January 2009 Philipp Kaufmann met Christian Wetzel, one of the founding members of DGNB in Germany, and learned about the activities of DGNB.
- We (PK, GM) agreed that:
  - Something like that is needed for Austria.
  - We as academics are be in the position to start such an initiative.
  - This initiative would be a valuable service to the Austrian real estate industry.
When and how did OGNI start?

- February 2009
  - Start of planning, first talks with DGNB
- April 2009
  - Registration of OGNI as non profit NGO („Verein“)
- May 2009
  - Start of the initial phase
- June 2009
  - Signing of the cooperation agreement with DGNB
- September 29th, 2009
  - Founding event with 124 founding members
A green building council needs reputation in the industry.

For reputation you need:
- Members
- Projects
- Auditors
- An evaluation standard

All of that quickly and simultaneously – risk of deadlocks.

Our approach:
- Clear goals and principles
- Roadmap
- Target the big players
OGNI principles

- International
  - No Austrian solution, but an international one
  - Cooperation with DGNB
  - Become a member of the World Green Building Council

- From the industry for the industry
  - Use the expertise and good will of industry
  - Members, committees, task forces

- Use market forces
  - Business opportunities for auditors
  - Certificate as a necessary element – competition among developers
Roadmap (strategic plan)

- Certification as the core activity
  - Key product
  - Brings and keeps members, justifies public events, education activities (auditor training)
  - Requires substantial office support
  - Develop new system variants, update existing systems
  - Certificate is the key argument in awareness building
  - Blue Card (for existing buildings)

- Go beyond certification of buildings
  - 3-P-approach: products, processes, persons
  - Shift of perspective from buildings to industry
# OGNI development

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Evaluating the development

- **Purpose of the study:**
  "to identify whether and how OGNI contributes to the development of a sustainable real estate industry in Austria"

- **Basis:**
  - Survey of 90 OGNI members and auditors
  - 2 expert interviews
The sample consists of 90 OGNI members and auditors. The majority of respondents is male and belong to the age group 25-50. More than 80% of the respondents are academics and hold a senior position in their company.
**ÖGNI membership**

**When did you become a OGNI member?**

Note: founding members are members since 2009.

- Continuous growth of members and auditors over time
How did you know about OGNI? (Sub-sample Members)

- Clear diffusion into the Austrian real estate industry – (founding) members as multipliers
How did you know about OGNI?
(Sub-sample Auditors)

- Result for members confirmed for auditors

N=57
Does OGNI support you in the audit process? (Auditor sub-sample)

- OGNI-principle „Use market forces“
- Auditors (independent actors) feel supported
How many OGNI events do you attend annually? (All respondents, N=64)

- Awareness building and networking seem to work – majority attend 2 events per year

Mean value: 1.97
Sustainable real estate in Austria (all respondents, N=63)

OGNI is a driver for a sustainable construction industry in Austria

OGNI actively contributes to a sustainable construction industry in Europe

OGNI activities are publicly acknowledged

OGNI is well known in the Austrian real estate industry

OGNI goals are clear and comprehensible

OGNI foundation was an important driver for a sustainable construction industry

The public is more aware of sustainable construction industry because of OGNI

Certified buildings show an increased market value

Certified buildings are important to make society aware of sustainability

Sustainable construction is a future topic in Austria

Political decision maker support the sustainable construction industry

Different certifications (gold, silver, bronze) do only have a marginal effect on the market

Certified buildings show an increased market value
The potential of sustainable construction in Austria (all respondents, N=61)

- Lighthouse projects are important for promoting sustainable construction.
- Lighthouse projects will not be visible in the future.
- All stakeholders agree upon sustainable construction in Austria.
- Extensive sustainable construction will not be realized due to high market values.
- The sustainable construction market will grow dynamically in Austria.

Members
Auditors
Member and auditor
Total
Conclusions

• The OGNI-strategy (principles, certification, 3P approach) seems to work well
  • Growing numbers of members, auditors & projects
  • Support from members and auditors
  • Visibility in the industry
• Members and auditors see an increasing importance for sustainability in Austrian real estate
• Members and auditors view OGNI as an important player in Austria (less so in Europe)
• Sustainability shifted from a building characteristic to a mode of the real estate industry and beyond