

Innovative Cob-Based Project Receives Major European Award

The judges were impressed by the “innovative low carbon technology” used to build cob houses and how it contributed to low-energy construction

By [Jack Woodfield](#) on 14 Oct 2019

Photographer: [Hudson Architects](#)



The CobBauge project has received a major international award for its impact towards developing a more sustainable way of building homes.

The EU-funded CobBauge project was announced as the winner in the sustainability category at the RegioStars awards in Brussels. The RegioStars awards, which are organised by the European Commission, recognise Europe's most innovative regional projects.

CobBauge is a multi-million pound project striving to create a new generation of cob builds. Last month [Homebuilding.co.uk](#) wrote about the [potential the CobBauge has for transforming mainstream homebuilding](#), and its contribution to low-energy construction has now received European acclaim.

Cob houses have existed for centuries, but the CobBauge project has taken the design further by developing a sustainable and natural construction technique that brings the technique into the 21st century.

The CobBauge system, devised by the University of Plymouth, Norwich-based Hudson Architects and French researchers, works by combining two types of cob in one construction system. Previously, cob builds did not satisfy contemporary [building regulations](#), but this new design complies with building regulations both in the UK and France.

Anthony Hudson of Hudson Architects said: "According to latest research as buildings become more efficient, embodied energy becomes a significantly higher proportion of total life cycle energy use. Given that we have an urgent need to minimise our impact on the world around us, the low embodied energy of CobBauge represents a major step towards a more sustainable way of building."

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Karen Hood-Cree, from Plymouth University, said of the award: "The judges were particularly impressed by the development of an innovative low carbon technology to build cob houses using local soil and agricultural/waste fibres. It was felt that this technology could make an important contribution to the reduction of CO₂ emissions, improved energy efficiency, high levels of indoor air quality and an overall carbon neutral strategy."

The Future of Cob Builds

Cob builds use a mixture of earth, natural fibres and water, and have the potential to reduce the energy needed for heating homes.

The CobBauge project received more than €4m in funding from the EU earlier this year, with the plan to now locate a building project on which to create two full-size buildings. Once the homes have been constructed, they will be monitored for energy use, thermal conditions and indoor air quality in comparison with equivalent, conventionally-constructed homes.

The project also has implications for [self builders](#) and [renovators](#), with CobBauge researchers looking to simplify the cob build process so people can build their own cob homes.

The final stage of the project will involve forecasting the financial and environmental impact of cob builds, and assess how the houses can be implemented in the mainstream.