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1. Pilot Project Description

VVO Group is the largest producer of housing services operating on national level in Finland. The company owns about 40 000 residences in about 70 locations all over the country. Of the total, about 32 000 are rental housing and 8 000 are right-of-occupancy homes.

In addition to the head offices there are 13 district offices, which take care of local marketing and operational management. Cleaning and maintenance services are outsourced and provided by local maintenance companies.

VVO's refurbishment system is based on continuous periodical repair and maintenance of common areas, building components and HVAC systems; based on life cycles of different building components. Dwelling repairs are carried out individually, mainly in connection with removals of tenants and inspections after every 10 years of tenancy. For both these renovation types there are alternative concepts available, which encourage the tenants in taking good care of their flats and doing minor renovations on their own.

The pilot property is a typical example of VVO's large 70's housing stock; situated in the capital area (city of Vantaa) but in a less valued suburb (Länsimäki). The mix of apartments in the area has a slight predominance in owner-occupied flats.

The property comprises two buildings, which have altogether four staircases, ground floor plus five living floors, and 80 dwellings. Dwellings vary in size from 32 m² (1 room + kitchen) to 85 m² (4 rooms + kitchen); average dwelling size is 54 m². Construction year was 1971.

The pilot project is an example of VVO's latest dwelling repair concept, which was developed to solve the more extensive refurbishment needs in VVO's older stock. It gives the tenants a possibility to decide individually if they want to have the quality level of their apartment raised; and if so, to which level and concerning which rooms. Different repair operations and quality alternatives are modularly priced as permanent rent increases.

2 State of the Art - February 2002 – pilot

VVO's pilot work is twofold. The technical part is the dwelling refurbishment program going on in the pilot property Maalinauhantie 7. The other angle has been to clarify and describe the factors that create and strengthen social sustainability in property management and refurbishment.

The dwelling repair program has proceeded as planned. The active repairing period - after the launching of the contract renovation possibility in the house in October 2000 - has calmed down and no new orders are active at the moment. The right to order a dwelling renovation is continuing, so the situation will be monitored through the whole SUREURO project. It will give a good perspective to tenants' preferences in a genuine choice situation.

The study of the social indicators in property management, My Home Is My Castle, was also carried out as planned. The outcome was displayed in digital form (CD-ROM), and English version of it was presented in the SUREURO Delft Conference in October 2001. A web-version of it is also published in the SUREURO web-site, under the conference-material section

3 The work performed during the first 24 month

3.1. Tenants participation

The concept, principles and properties of the contract renovation model was presented to and discussed together with VVO's national board of tenants, which is the highest official representative of the whole tenant organisation. After that phase the product selection, terms and prices are common to all. In

Maalinhautie (like in all properties entering the program) every tenant household makes its own independent decision over the matter. As a start-up for the contract renovation program, a model flat was renovated and a tenant meeting was arranged in it, so that the renovation alternatives introduced as clearly as possible.

3.2. Partnerships research

My home is my castle –study was performed in collaboration with a Finnish Research team, Future Media Home –group of the University of Industrial Arts of Helsinki. A workshop with VVO’s national board of tenants was also arranged as a part of the project.

A number of properties were chosen to the analysis and interviews were made in all of them with both tenants, house managers and maintenance personnel. The study was focused on functions typical to VVO; self-motivated projects, tenant democracy, and different actors and their co-operation and relationships with each other.

The outcome of the project consists of

- Examples of how good interplay and strong tenants’ commitment can affect on economical and ecological sustainability
- A set of social factors or needs, described from the tenants’ point of view, to be considered in developing new models and tools for housing services and management, for promoting social sustainability
- A test of these factors to be used as indicators for social quality of a few of VVO’s property management models.

3.3 National organisation

VVO’s case is one of the three separate pilot cases by three different housing organisations (ATT and VTS being the other two). The Finnish pilot team is co-ordinated by Finnish Real Estate Federation.

3.4 Phase in progress

The first phase of the project is completed. Functioning models for production and networks of suppliers and contractors have been created, so that orders are being delivered effectively and according to the promises given to customers.

Also a side-line for a “lighter” version of the contract renovation have been started, based on the experiences and discussions with tenants and housing managers in different district offices, and has already passed the original version in numbers. In Maalinhautie nobody has chosen this other option.

At the moment there is also a trial going on of a senior version of the contract renovation, with modules designed to facilitate elderly people’s living at home. The demand for it still remains to be seen.

3.5 Measurements

There are no quantitative targets set in the project. A larger satisfaction survey has been made (as a mail questionnaire, spring 2001) concerning tenants’ experiences and opinions about the contract renovations. A distinct majority considers the system good (the opportunity to decide themselves about the dwelling renovations), also people who haven’t ordered any extra renovations.

The monitoring of the amount of renovation orders is continuing. So far 10 flats (12,5 % of total) have been renovated. On the average (in all properties involved in this program so far) about 20 % of the tenants have ordered a major contract renovation (including either basic kitchen and/or bathroom renovation), within a couple of years time.

Although the pilot project as such is not aimed to reduce energy or water consumption, VVO is constantly tackling these issues in many ways. In Maalinauhantie, in the project period heating energy consumption has gone up 4 % (after cleaning the ac ducts and calibration of air flows), raw water consumption has gone down –7% and property electricity consumption diminished –8 % compared to the 1999 level.

4 The coming 24 months

Within the organisation of VVO, substantial amount of people are involved in the marketing and managing the different dwelling renovation and redecoration options; about one hundred housing managers and marketing people and even much more in the co-operating local maintenance companies.

In order to successfully and efficiently settle these new concepts into normal everyday practice, the next step will be to create good managing practises and processes for implementing them. This will be based on the work already started in VVO, which aims at segmentation and differentiation of properties and housing services in general.

Alongside the general framework, the next step will also include preparation of instruction and marketing material for the different parties; tenants and employees of VVO and maintenance companies. The relationship between all different dwelling renovation products needs to be clarified. The main old renovation models (move-in benefit and reward scores) are included in the SUREURO toolbox and will be evaluated and developed further in connection to the Work Package1 CM KET teamwork.