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Call for evidence – Construction Services Act

The Svinesund Committee, which is one of twelve cross-border cooperation committees supported by the Nordic Council of Ministers, has been working since 2020 on border obstacles linked to wood construction and highlighted the opportunities for companies along the Swedish-Norwegian border to work with wood constructions on the other side of the border. We primarily experience three forms of obstacles that limit cross-border operations:

1. Differences in national building regulations. Here, the Svinesund Committee, with financial support from the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR), has worked on harmonising the regulations governing construction in the Nordic countries. The current strategy is to investigate the possibility of introducing a Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) for buildings between the Nordic countries, and to conduct a pilot study of the regulations for noise, health and hygiene using Åland as a model.
1. Tax rules such as the 6-month rule, which means that companies must either replace their entire workforce after six months or carry out the work only with workers residing in the neighboring country. Another example used to be the VAT rules, which meant that VAT must be deposited for machinery and other equipment that is to be used to carry out work in the neighboring country.
2. Administrative barriers, i.e. border barriers due to public authorities interpreting regulations differently or having administrative rules and routines that make it difficult for business or work across borders. Examples of such procedures may include approval of professional qualifications and authorizations, national permits and certificates, and various certificates.

The Svinesund Committee welcomes all initiatives that facilitate cross-border operations within construction services. The “Construction Services Act” can, in particular, contribute to simplifying existing administrative procedures and certification processes through mutual recognition of national permits and professional qualifications. We assume that such mutual recognition does not only cover EU Member States but also other countries that are part of the EU internal market, including Iceland and Norway.