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Integrated Pest Management as European standard – is it possible?

Abstract - As part of the work within the European Committee for Standardization (CEN), standards for conservation of cultural property are being developed in CEN/TC (Technical Committee) 346, Conservation of Cultural Property. In Working Group 4 Environment, a draft is being prepared to create a proposal for standardised Integrated Pest Management. The author of this paper welcomes delegates to the Meeting on Cultural Heritage Pests in Piacenza to contribute to the discussion regarding standardised methods for pest control in the cultural heritage sector.

Key words: IPM, Integrated Pest Management, standardization.

INTRODUCTION

Standards are an indispensable part of daily life, though many of us may not be aware of it. Standards are used in all levels of society – trade, construction, etc. There are standards for where to put the brake pedal in a car, how children's' playgrounds should be constructed to fulfil safety requirements, and there is even a standard for how glasses for wine-tasting should be designed in order to fulfil the requirements of the wine making industry. At present, standards are developed as management tools to help us taking care of our environment, and making it easier for companies to become more environmentally aware. The definition of a standard has been interpreted as a 'voluntary common solution to recurring problems'. The official definition by the European Committee for Standardization is: A standard (French: norme, German: Norm) is a technical document designed to be used as a rule, guideline or definition. It is a consensus-built, repeatable way of doing something.

Every European country has its own national standard institute that works with national standards, European standards (CEN) and global standards (ISO). Anyone with an interest in creating standards can take part. To give an example, the Swedish national mirror group for conservation of cultural property have members from the National Heritage Board, the Royal Library, the State Property Board, museums, universities, a showcase manufacturer and a transport company.

European standards on conservation of cultural property

In spring 2007 a business plan was formed to start working on European standards

for conservation of cultural property. Technical committee CEN/TC 346 Conservation of Cultural Property was created. The business plan states: "A specific European standardisation activity in the field of conservation of cultural property is essential to acquire a common unified scientific approach to the problems relevant to the preservation and conservation of the cultural property."¹

Since the start, there have at times been heated discussions within the conservation community whether standards for conservation are the way forward. Critics have said that it is impossible to create standards for conservation, where objects and collections are unique. Others have replied that the standards will be of great help to museums, contractors and others who are in need of standardised methods to correctly measure temperature and relative humidity, transport and pack, define colour measurements, and similar. "If you think standards are complicated, you should try without!" is a quote sometimes heard at meetings when consensus is hard to reach.

It is important to involve the conservation community as a whole in this work. Therefore, CEN/TC 346 is liaising with organisations such as ICOM-CC (International Council of Museums – Committee for conservation), IIC (International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works), and ECCO (European Confederation of Conservator – Restorers' Organisations). They thus have an opportunity to be of assistance with constructive criticism and add comments.

CEN/TC 346 is divided in five so called Working Groups, WGs. WG 4 is called Environment, and works for example on standards for measurement of temperature and relative humidity, light and lighting, storage, showcases, heating and ventilation in historic buildings, energy efficiency and risk assessment.

Presentation of IPM standard

In 2010, a new work item was adopted, Integrated Pest Management (IPM). The aim for this proposal was to give a comprehensive standard method managing the pest problem for end users. The scope was to define methods for reducing pests and pest infestations, and managing pest infested objects and areas within the cultural property sector. It was clearly stated that IPM implies a holistic approach to the pest problem, including preventive measures and treatments, emphasizing on non-toxic methods.

The justifications for creating a standard were the following:

- This standard will not repeat work already done but will draw on and make reference to such work and combine it into one unified European document.
- Although IPM exists in other areas, the sensitivity and unique nature of cultural material requires a separate standard.
- There is a EU requirement on sustainability and increased focus on dangerous substances, for example through the REACH directive. Since many traditional toxic substances used for insect eradication are being banned, there is a need for prevention rather than cure, and non-toxic methods.
- Rising temperatures caused by climatic changes may cause influx of insects pests not formerly known in many European countries.

End users were identified from a broader basis than just cultural heritage institu-

¹ CEN/TC 346 N. 51, 2007-03-29, see business plan on the official website.

tions (museums, archives and libraries and similar). In addition commercial companies such as auction houses, transport companies, banks (for storage in bank vaults) and private storage companies were included.

It is important to state that there is no new research involved in creating a standard. Existing methods and knowledge form the foundations of any standard. The aim with a standard for IPM is digesting and extracting the best available practice from literature into the format of a standard, containing standard methods and planning procedures.

At the first task group meeting in Florence in October 2010, it was decided that the standard would focus on collections, not building fabric or very large artefacts such as museum ships or similar. A widely accepted framework for preventive conservation developed by CCI (Canadian Conservation Institute) was to be followed to guide the work – avoid, block, detect, respond and treat/recover (Michalski, 1994).

Current work

Two meetings per year are organised within WG 4. A first draft of the standard is being prepared to be presented at the next meeting in Bilbao in October 2011. At present, countries that are represented in the task group working with the IPM standard are Sweden, Denmark, UK and Germany. At the latest meeting in Visby in April 2011, the following challenges were identified:

- It is of great importance that experts from other countries in South and East Europe join the group, considering the different regional variations in fauna and also national legislation on eradication methods.
- Any liaison from national groups working with IPM is welcome.
- Treatments methods are to be mentioned in the standard. However, they should be dealt with in more details in a part 2 of the standard.

The task group is interested to know what kind of existing standards there are on pest management and pest eradication methods.

Discussion at Piacenza meeting

The Meeting on Cultural Heritage Pests in Piacenza provides an excellent opportunity for experts in the field and cultural heritage professionals to give their views and input for a standard for IPM. The author welcomes this possibility, and hopes for a fruitful discussion.

Useful links:

<http://www.cen.eu/cen/Sectors/TechnicalCommitteesWorkshops/CENTechnicalCommittees/Pages/default.aspx?param=411453&title=Conservation%20of%20cultural%20property>
(CEN/TC 346 Conservation of cultural property)

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/chemicals/reach/index_en.htm (REACH directive)

<http://europeanreach.net/> (REACH directive)

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REFERENCES

- MICHALSKI S., 1994 - A Systematic Approach to Preservation: Description and Integration with Other Museum Activities. In: Preventive Conservation Practice, Theory and Research. Preprints of the Contributions to the Ottawa Congress, 12-16 September 1994, International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Work. Ed. Roy & Smith, pp. 8-11.