

Industrial and Commercial Public Body

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THE TECHNICAL EXPERIMENTAL ASSESSMENT "ATEX"

Information leaflet

to facilitate experimentation on innovations: the ATEX

The Technical Appraisal¹ procedure initiated by the December 2 1969 Ministerial decree requires that reliable justifications that often take a long time to collect should be provided, to assure that the Recommendation is constructive and sufficiently credible for the customer, the prescriber, the foreign importer, the insurance company, etc. It also specifies that the applicant should be consulted before and after formulation of the Assessment for the applicant's protection, all of which correspondingly extends the period before the Assessment becomes operational.

Furthermore, members of Specialist Groups, justifiably wishing to minimize risks to the user, tend to base their decisions on the behaviour of existing experimental projects.

But for these first projects, insurance companies do not have enough information that they can use as a basis for assessment of the risk that they need to cover, and technical inspectors hesitate to get their clients to commit themselves in the adventure of novelty.

The following organizations:

- AIMCC (*Association des Industries de Matériaux, Composants et Équipements pour la Construction* - Association of Industries for Construction Materials, Components and Equipment)
- COPREC (*Comité Professionnel de la Prévention et du Contrôle technique* - Professional Committee for Prevention and Technical Inspection)
- CSTB (*Centre Scientifique et Technique du Bâtiment* - French Scientific and Technical Centre for Building)
- FNPC (*Fédération nationale des Promoteurs-Constructeurs* - National Federation of Promoters-Manufacturers)
- AFAC (*Association Française des Assureurs Construction* - French Association of Construction Insurers)²
- UNFOHLM (*Union Nationale des Fédérations d'Organismes d'HLM* - National Union of Low Cost Housing Organization Federations)
- UNSFA (*Union Nationale des Syndicats Français d'Architectes* - National Union of French Architect Associations)
- UTI (*Union Technique Interprofessionnelle des Fédérations Nationales du Bâtiment et des Travaux Publics* - Interprofessional Technical Union of National Building and Public Works Federations)³

have taken the initiative **to provide a fast procedure for technical assessment of any product, system or equipment for which a Technical Appraisal is not yet the subject and for which experimental use on one or several sites is necessary to complete the development, and to make this procedure available for innovators under the aegis of CSTB**, with the objective of reducing difficulties encountered by promoters of new techniques.

When this assessment known as the ATEX (*Appréciation Technique d'Expérimentation* - Technical Experimental Assessment) **is favourable**, it:

- **makes it easier for the beneficiary to experiment with the innovation that he presents and to produce references in order to obtain a Technical Appraisal;**
- **facilitates the coverage of risks with insurance companies under adapted conditions;**
- **encourages clients to experiment.**
- **favours recourse to regulatory openings.**

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¹ The Technical Appraisal applies to products, materials, components, equipment, systems and in general any techniques that are not governed by standard documents or that waive these documents.

² Since, replaced by the APSAD (*Association Plénière des Sociétés d'Assurance-Dommage* - Plenary Association of Insurance-Damage Companies)

³ Since, replaced by the FFB (*Fédération Française du Bâtiment* - French Building Federation)

What does the ATEEx procedure consist of ?

The ATEEx procedure takes place before the Technical Appraisal which, after experimentation, is still the normal procedure to orient and facilitate the industrial development of new techniques.

It is defined by a regulation produced by the above mentioned organizations under the terms of which:

1° The procedure is available to anyone who asks for it:

- either the innovation promoter,
- or users of said innovation (clients, designers, contractors, technical inspectors and insurance companies),

provided that:

- one of the products used is innovative;
- the method used for sizing the building is innovative;
- the completion of works is innovative;
- the context of objective-oriented regulation makes it possible to use alternative solutions that are not described in the regulation itself.

ATEEx case a: the Assessment aims at a product or a system for a specific restricted period of time;

ATEEx case b: the Assessment relates to a project.

ATEEx case c: the Assessment relates to the application to a new experimental project of one or more techniques that have already been the subject of an ATEEx deemed favourable.

2° Based on a report by an expert, the application is examined by a restricted Committee presided over by CSTB, comprising essentially experts appointed by:

- AIMCC (Association of Industries for Construction Materials, Components and Equipment)
- COPREC (Professional Committee for Prevention and Technical Inspection)
- CSTB (French Scientific and Technical Centre for Building)
- FFB (French Building Federation)
- UNSFA (National Union of French Architect Associations)

This Expert Committee produces a « Technical Experimental Assessment » draft **based on the state of the technical file presented**. CSTB formulates the ATEEx based on this draft, and notifies the applicant.

3° The assessment relates to:

- safety on site and in service;
- feasibility of the experimental application;
- probable operation of the innovation in service;
- probability and severity of any foreseeable disorders;
- the possibility of making repairs if necessary,
- possibly, the ability to comply with the requirements pertaining to the above-mentioned.

It is associated with recommendations or expectations, where necessary.

It is limited to a fixed validity time (case *a*), or to site(s) for which the application was introduced (case *b*).

4° The time required for the procedure mainly depends on the time needed to prepare the technical file. Once the latter is completed, the ATEEx may be issued within two months.

5° An ATEEx is not renewed.

However, when taking into account the time required to implement a more comprehensive examination, the Expert Committee may grant an extension of the ATEEx after making sure that the previous experiments were properly carried out and that the holder is deeply involved in the examination to come.

6° The ATEEx is distributed to the applicant and to the members having participated in the Expert Committee. The CSTB publishes ATEEx case a deemed favourable. ATEEx case b and case c deemed favourable may be issued too, if requested by the applicant.

7° A Coordination Committee composed of representatives of the initiating organizations mentioned above (p.1) coordinates and controls operation of the procedure.

It is the Recourse Authority that can be approached following a refusal of an investigation or a problem with the procedure.

8° All Committee members are required to maintain professional secrecy, firstly for the composition, manufacturing, special skills, etc. related to the products, equipment and processes examined, but also for the content of the ATEEx.

Useful information

Before an ATEEx application can be receivable, the innovation according to the application must have been the subject of attentive searches, tests, verifications and studies, both for production and for implementation.

Consequently, a person requesting an ATEEx must be capable of producing a sufficiently detailed technical file so that the Expert Committee can make a pronouncement.

Costs involved in obtaining an ATEEx are fixed.

For any further information, please contact:

- either one of the ATEEx promoter organizations,
- or the secretariat: 84, avenue Jean Jaurès
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