Title of Article: Economic Characteristics of Compressed Laterite Bricks in Housing Construction in Nigeria

Author(s): Pearl Akunnaya Opoko and Eziyi Offia Ibem

Outlet: 8th CIDB Postgraduate Conference held 10-11 February 2014 in Johannesburg, South Africa

Abstract: The need to improve the supply of housing calls for research into the use of alternative construction materials in Nigeria and other developing countries with similar housing challenge. This paper examined the economic characteristics of the cement stabilised laterite block/bricks (CSLBs) in order to identify factors responsible for its widespread use as walling material in housing construction in Nigeria. Data used in this paper were derived via qualitative research method, including market surveys, through which prices of four building materials were obtained and used to compute the cost of walling a two bedroom prototype house. In addition, oral interviews of 26 purposively selected industry stakeholders were conducted to elicit their views on why there is low usage of CSLBs as walling material in housing construction in Nigeria. Result shows that despite the cost reduction and potentials in employment generation offered by CSLBs, the social stigma against the materials appears to be overwhelming. Other factors militating against the use of CSLBs as an alternative to sandcrete blocks as walling materials include unavailability of the materials and skills required to use them. The paper concludes that the prospects of using CSLBs as walling materials and benefits associated with it can be enhanced in Nigeria by encouraging the production of the material at cottage level and public enlightenment campaigns on the benefits of using the material as well as training and re-training of artisans and tradesmen in the art of production and usage of the building material.