

About international construction price databases

In this text "estimate" and "Bill of Quantities" refer to the same document, a listing of the work units describing a project, with a text, a quantity and maybe a unit price with a breakdown (detailed analysis of the resources forming the price).

Note: Presto does not contain a database, but it can be used for all of them.

Background

Spain is the largest world producer of price databases for construction. Due to the early success of Presto, many private and public entities can easily publish this type of databases.

	Fecha	Resumen	Tamaño
1	07/12/2016	BPCCL	33.078.503
2	07/12/2016	BASE DE COSTES DE LA CONSTRUCCIÓN DE ANDALUCIA	13.548.376
3	10/10/2016	Precio de la Construcción Centro 2016	1.088.985.279
4	28/09/2016	Rehabilitación, Mantenimiento, Reparación y Reformas - Precio de la Construcción Centro 2015	375.218.141
5	13/07/2016	BASE DATOS CONSTRUCCION IVE	57.605.824
6	01/07/2016	DGC	2.673.698
7	29/03/2016	Precios de la Construcción Cantabria 2016	203.806.740
8	14/03/2016	Precio de la Construcción Centro 2016	1.035.284.681
9	21/05/2014	IVE2014_BDCCA14	32.827.841
10	21/05/2014	BASE DATOS CONSTRUCCION IVE	30.401.237
11	09/04/2014	Precio de la Construcción Centro 2014	783.885.282
12	08/01/2014	Cuadro de Precios de Referencia de la Dirección General de Carreteras	566.037
13	08/08/2013	JuntaExtremadura2012	30.574.798
14	17/05/2013	Precio de la Construcción Centro 2013	740.711.930
15	14/05/2013	BASE DATOS CONSTRUCCION IVE	11.004.101

Some construction price databases.

The Spanish culture of construction was also a main reason for this.

- The public works regulations require the breakdown of prices to be printed in the project documents, not as a summary of labor, materials and equipment, but as a complete analysis of every required item.
- Spanish architects and engineers have to provide a unit priced for every work unit in the project, unlike other countries, where prices are provided by independent cost estimators or by the contracting companies.
- Spanish professionals tend to use long texts describing the work units, and the technical specifications documents are poor or useless.
- Also, many Spanish professionals still consider the law as the main reference for their job, instead of the real value added to the project. So, any "official" price, published by any state or local authority, is considered to be more realistic than a real price taken from the market.

The result is a collection of more than forty different databases.

Most used construction price databases in Spain	URL
Colegio de Arquitectos Técnicos y Aparejadores de Guadalajara	www.coaatgu.com
Base de Costes de la Construcción de Andalucía	www.juntadeandalucia.es
Comunidad de Madrid	www.madrid.org
Fundación de Estudios para la Calidad en la Edificación de Asturias	www.fecea.org
Gobierno Vasco	www.presupuesta.com
Instituto de Tecnología de la Construcción de Cataluña	www.itec.es
Instituto de la Construcción de Castilla y León	www.iccl.es
Instituto Tecnológico de Galicia	www.presupuesta.com
Instituto Valenciano de la Edificación	www.five.es

These databases contain thousands of materials and work units, also due to the use of parametric concepts, created by Presto and very popular among the database developers. Some of them can be downloaded or consulted through Internet at no cost, others require a fee.

Every database has its own coding system for work units and resources, which prevents a real interchange of information among users. But the coding for the groups or chapters is not intended for acting as an WBS -Work Breakdown Structure-, so every professional uses its own WBS.

So, the requirement for using specific databases in public works does not result in a common WBS for the estimates.

Price databases are considered very useful. Most estimates are created by simply picking predefined concepts from databases, creating only the very specific items needed in a particular project.

But the Spanish situation is different in most other countries.

Spanish professionals working abroad are surprised not to find this kind of supporting tool for their work, and we receive many questions about this problem.

Databases in other countries

The existing databases are different from the Spanish ones in many senses:

- They are not free or cheap, their cost being in the range of 500-1000 €/ year.
- Consequently, they have a high degree of protection to prevent illegal use.
- As a result, they are more difficult to navigate and the information is not so easily transferred into the estimate.
- They lack the powerful price analysis of Spanish databases and the software has less flexibility and options than Presto.

But they are useful for their purpose, providing many work items with a market price and a description good enough for contracting and for executing the works.

Company	Scope	URL
RSMMeans	USA	www.rsmeans.com
SPON	UK and other countries	www.sponpress.com
Batiprix	France	www.batiprix.com
Free Construction Cost Data	International	www.allcostdata.info
Compass International	International	www.compassinternational.net

Many of these databases share a common coding for chapters and work units, based on CSI MasterFormat or Unifomat, making it easier the navigation and the data integration.

The relationship of these databases with estimating software is not as easy as it is with Presto and Spanish databases. Units have to be selected one by one, exported and then imported into the software. Sometimes, the database developer also develops and sells the estimating software, in which case the integration is better, but only one of the two components (either the database or the software) reaches professional quality.

Using the existing local databases, when available

The user subscribes or acquires the desired database, normally receiving some software to select the required work units. Normally, the result is an Excel file or some other type of listing, from which components may be copied to Presto one by one.

Even more difficult than using Presto with Spanish databases, this procedure is normally the same that the local professionals use everyday day themselves.

Our recommendation is beginning with a try period or a sample, in order to understand if the content satisfies the needs.

In this case, RIB Spain is eager to work together with the user, to improve the import process, while it is feasible from a technical point of view, or even to establishing a market or technical agreement with the database provider.

Translating Spanish price databases

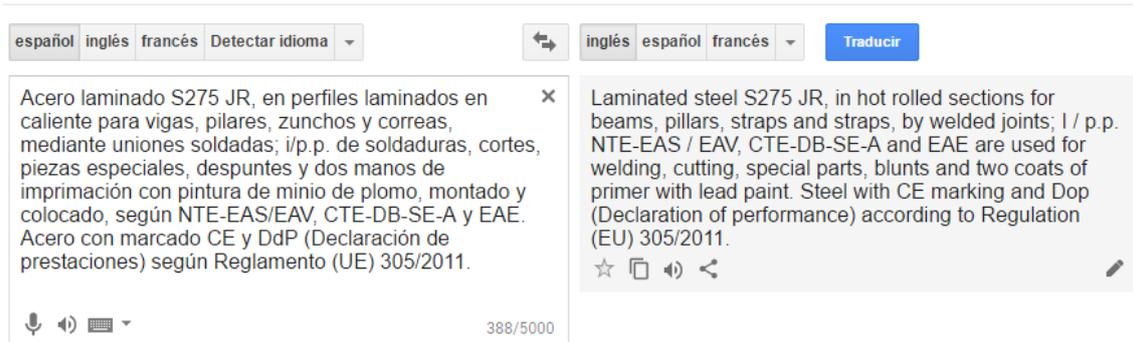
When using a database from a country in a different country there are three aspects to consider: the local language, the local price and the local construction environment.

The local language

Presto can translate the texts of estimates and databases using the services supplied by Google.

This services, that can be used and tested for free in the Google translation web page, provide fairly good texts, especially in technical contexts.

The automatic service included in Presto has a cost, directly satisfied from the user to Google, very low for the size of a normal estimate but can be relevant for the whole content of a database.



Google translation of a Spanish work unit in Guadalajara prices database, 2016 edition.

When the goal is to understand a Bill of Quantities received in an unfamiliar language, the result of translation to the user language is normally good enough to allowing for pricing the project, or for deciding not to bid.

If the intention is to translate an estimate in a familiar language for the user to another language, it will require for sure a professional revision.

There are some rules for getting better translations:

- The original text should be well structured
- Abbreviations and localisms don't translate properly

BUDOWA	CONSTRUCCIÓN
PRZEBUDOWA I BUDOWA SIECI WODOCI?GOWEJ	Reconstrucción y construcción de RED DE AGUA Sistema de alimentación
<i>Przebudowa sieci wodoci?gowej rozdzielczej</i>	<i>Reconstrucción del suministro de agua? Distribución del sistema de suministro</i>
<i>Budowa sieci wodoci?gowej rozdzielczej</i>	<i>La construcción del sistema de suministro de distribución de acueducto</i>
PRZEBUDOWA I BUDOWA KANALIZACJI	Reconstrucción y construcción de las aguas residuales
<i>Przebudowa kanalizacji sanitarnej</i>	<i>Reconstrucción del sistema de alcantarillado sanitario</i>
<i>Budowa komór ?elbetowych kanalizacji sanitarnej</i>	<i>Construcción de las cámaras de trasdosados de alcantarillado sanitario concreto</i>
<i>Budowa kanalizacji sanitarnej</i>	<i>La construcción del sistema de alcantarillado</i>
<i>Budowa przepompowni ?cieków sanitarnych</i>	<i>Construcción de saneamiento de aguas residuales de bombeo</i>

Presupuesto en idioma polaco y traducción al castellano

A good idea for validating the translation is to retranslate the result back into the original language and check the meaning. If the meaning is wrong or difficult to understand, refine the original text until the reverse translation is good enough.

The local price

Price has to be adapted to local market. Sometimes the labor may be cheaper and the industrial products more expensive, or the other way around.

The local construction culture

Products and systems are different in every country. No translation or software tools are able to handle this difference.

Please feel free to contact Presto to improve our support for using any international database.