

Awards for sustainable architecture open

Entries are open for the 2015/2016 AfriSam-SAIA Award for Sustainable Architecture + Innovation. This year, two new award categories have been added.



The bi-annual awards recognises contributions that bring sustainable innovation to human living environments through an integrated approach to communities, planning, design, architecture, building practice, natural systems and technology. Entries close at the end of March 2016.

New award categories

The two mainstay categories of Sustainable Architecture and Research in Sustainability are now joined by Sustainable Products and Technology and Sustainable Social Programmes. This means that a full scope of visionaries working in the field of sustainable architecture, construction and innovation will now be recognised by the awards presented bi-annually by AfriSam and the South African Institute of Architects (SAIA).

"The role of architects and their project partners in ensuring South Africa plays its part in the global journey to sustainability is really emphasised by these awards. It is also a recognition of the fact that we are now in a new era that recognises that sustainable design has to be an integral part of the building industry from the very start of a project," comments AfriSam's CEO Stephan Olivier.

"The emphasis is no longer on just the architecture and building practice," adds Kevin Bingham, Vice President of SAIA.

"It is now on the ongoing collaboration and innovation of these two key stakeholders working with communities, natural systems, technology and planning across all levels. This is the only way to bring sustainable innovation to the inhabitable environments."

Supporting the global shift

The broadening of the scope of the 2015/2016 AfriSam-SAIA Award for Sustainable Architecture + Innovation to four categories is step with important advances both in South Africa and globally.



Both SAIA and AfriSam support this global shift: SAIA through encouraging its members to incorporate sustainability in building design at an early stage and AfriSam by its commitment to sustaining the environment through responsible manufacturing processes.

All four categories are geared towards the recognition of regenerative whole systems design. Project entries are required to demonstrate their positive impact through the embodiment of sound sustainable practices, carrying the hallmarks of great architectural or social design and demonstrating innovative thinking in the field of sustainability.

In particular, projects should:

- harmonise the use of resources with the conservation and strengthening of ecosystems (natural, social, human, financial, infrastructure).
- address the dignity of people through the creation of a socio-economic environment that is inclusionary, humane, self-sustaining, maximises the financial viability and impact, and acknowledges lifecycle cost efficiency during and post the implementation process and contributes towards and develop an ongoing regenerative future.

enhance the architectural landscape and contextual urban environment.

To support this, four key criteria will be considered by the adjudicators - Harmonisation, People Upliftment, Evolutionary Paradigm and Placemaking Performance.

The adjudicators for the awards are convener, Kevin Bingham along with Daniel Irurah (sustainable architecture academic), Llewellyn van Wyk (sustainable architect, CSIR), Sebasti Badenhorst (AfriSam representative), Eric Noir (Africa region director of the International Union of Architects' work programme, Architecture for a Sustainable Future) and Richard Stretton (architect and furniture designer).

Previous winners

Stretton's Koop Design is a previous AfriSam-SAIA Award winner for Sustainable Architecture (2010 and 2014) and also received a Merit Award in the 2014 competition. In 2014, Koop Design's Vukuzakhe - which examines urban development in the Municipality of eThekweni - won the category of works of social importance, including research. That same year, the Alexander Forbes Headquarters in Sandton, Johannesburg, designed by Paragon Architects and Paragon Interface, took top honours in the built work category.

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