

Launch of African research group on shopping centres

A sixth regional research group has been launched by the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) to help its 63,000 members tap into growth potential across the African continent. Belinda Clur, a Cape Town-based member of both the North American and European research groups, motivated the launch and will chair it. Clur is the MD of Clur Research International, a consultancy that provides services across Africa, primarily in the retail property sector.



Belinda Clur, a Cape Town-based member of both the North American and European research groups, motivated the launch and will chair the new African research group.

"Because of her knowledge of ICSC research structures and operations and her own professional focus on developments across Africa, Clur is well placed to lead this initiative," said Michael P. Niemira, director of research and chief economist ICSC, based in New York. "It is also recognition of the strong case she has put within the ICSC for the African growth story in recent years and for an ICSC involvement on the continent."

The proposed main aim of the group is to create a network of pan-African shopping centre, retail property and financial industry members to promote pan-African retail research, guide best practices and provide the ICSC with strategic direction and advice on industry issues and research initiatives that are specific to the African context.

Clur says, "I believe the group will serve a highly valuable role for the ever increasing number of shopping centre investors and retailers pioneering into what are often uncharted territories across Africa. It will offer a platform for engagement and opportunities for experience sharing, networks and collaboration. Given the alignment with and the support of the existing ICSC research groups, an added benefit will be an in-depth perspective of the dynamics of both emerging and developed economies."

She notes that the African research group is initially targeting a small core group of representatives from shopping centre landlords, investors, developers and retailers with a pan-African representation or focus.

"Africa clearly represents a unique growth opportunity for retail real estate professionals and this new research group is part of our initiative to support the industry in sub-Saharan Africa, in addition to our plans for education and attracting retailers to the region," said Michael Morrissey, ICSC's MD, responsible for sub-Saharan Africa, based in London. "The African research group will go a long way to provide our members with insights into this burgeoning area."