

GBCSA issues 50 Green Star SA certifications in six years

The Green Building Council South Africa (GBCSA) has achieved an exceptional milestone with 50 Green Star SA certifications in only six years.



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This achievement was celebrated at an event held in Johannesburg on 10 April by the GBCSA, which was established in 2007 to lead the transformation of the property sector by ensuring that all buildings are designed, built and operated in an environmentally responsible way.

The event was attended by Green Star SA project owners, accredited green building professionals, sponsors of rating tools used to develop and assess buildings, and representatives of property industry groups.

Developers of the 50 certified projects expect their buildings will result in significant annual savings of 76 million kilowatt hours (the amount of electricity needed by 5,300 households for a year), 115 million kilograms of carbon emissions (equivalent to taking 28,000 cars off the road), and 124 million litres of water (sufficient for 34,000 households for a year).

Certifications confirms commitment

"Reaching 50 certifications illustrates the commitment the South African commercial property sector has shown towards resource efficiency and climate change abatement, while creating healthier and more productive environments for us to work and live in," said Brian Wilkinson, CEO of the GBCSA.

"The GBCSA could not have achieved the success it has to date without the support of some very big players in the sector that have pioneered the way to a better future for people and planet. The 50 certifications celebratory event honoured and thanked these leaders for their valuable support."

Globally, the built environment is responsible for one third of all carbon emissions and with global warming a very real

concern that affects us all, a shift in focus to green building is something that should be foremost in everyone's minds - from government, to developers to the average man in the street.

Outside investors

According to McGraw and Hills' World Green Building Trend survey (2013), 51% of South Africa firms expect to be building green by 2015 - most notably in the commercial markets. This suggests that outside investors, developers and owners will have an ongoing, important role to play in the ongoing green building groundswell.

Going green is not just about the environment, the bottom-line benefits of building and operating green buildings are particularly important considering South Africa's rising energy costs and water scarcity - coupled with lower risks, improvements to employee productivity and ultimately, better investment returns and higher property valuations.

"We are absolutely thrilled by the uptake in green building in South Africa. In the past few months the number of buildings that have been certified, or which have applied for certification, has increased exponentially - with 20 buildings being certified in 2013 alone. We are confident that this upward spike will continue as an ongoing trend as increased market demand and clear financial rewards, coupled with mounting government regulations and shareholder pressures, provide multiple incentives to own and occupy high-performance green buildings," Wilkinson concluded.

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