Sassda launches app-based life cycle costing competition

The Southern Africa Stainless Steel Development Association (sassda) has launched a competition in which entrants need to use sassda's life cycle costing (LCC) app to calculate the long-term maintenance savings that could have been achieved had the Eiffel Tower been constructed from stainless steel.

Image source: www.pixabay.com

Sassda created the LCC app in 2016 with the aim of boosting the use of stainless steel in the local market. The product uses the standard accountancy principle of discounted cash flow, so that total costs incurred during a stainless steel structure's life cycle period are reduced to present day values.

Sassda executive Director John Tarboton says, "The app calculates a realistic comparison of the options available. In terms of material selection, it takes into account the reduced maintenance and the longer life span that stainless steel offers. We put considerable time and effort developing formulas for the real-time calculation of the LCC of stainless steel and this requires minimal entry of key top-line data, before calculating a breakdown of the relevant costs and presenting the results in a convenient email format to be sent to stakeholders."

The Eiffel Tower … only better

The competition was designed to bring the functionality of the app to life, with a tangible example of the fascinating and iconic Eiffel Tower which has an interesting history and was never meant to be a permanent fixture in Paris. In fact, it was specifically intended as an exhibit at the Paris Exposition in 1889 and was to be dismantled after the show.

Tarboton explains, “Had the Eiffel Tower been constructed from stainless steel, a fortune would have been saved on maintenance costs - instead of these long-term benefits, the tower has required painting every seven years, using 50 tonnes of paint each time, taking 25 painters up to 18 months to complete the job. Of course, stainless steel had not been invented in 1889 and we thus ask entrants to compare the life cycle costs of steel and stainless steel if the Eiffel Tower had to be built in 2017. We provide all the input data for the app and it only takes a few minutes to enter these into the app and calculate the initial costs, the operating costs and the life cycle costs."

Other parameters in the competition include a choice between a lean duplex and a utility ferritic. The lean duplex is more expensive and requires cleaning every 20 years to maintain its brilliant aesthetics, however, it is stronger, allowing thickness and hence weight savings. The utility ferritic is cheaper than the lean duplex, does not require cleaning but would weather to a brown patina.

Entrants then need to calculate and compare what the operating costs would be for the Eiffel Tower for the next 100 years if it were built out of mild steel, and either utility ferritic or lean duplex.

Reducing complexity and highlighting benefits

“Overall, we aim to show how the app is invaluable to professionals in the field, who want to bypass the complicated steps normally associated with this type of calculation; unless they also have an accountancy qualification.

“In this way, we’re hoping to educate the market on the inherent benefits of stainless steel which include minimal maintenance, a minimum 60-year lifespan and significant ‘green’ benefits,” says Tarboton.

Click here for full details on how to enter the competition and links to download the app.