



Building System and Diagnostics' co-founder Tan Phay Ping at Changi Airport's Terminal 4. His company was the energy and environmental sustainability consultant for the development. PHOTO: LEE LAI TEE



SkyResidence @ Dawson, one of HDB's 21 Green Mark projects this year. HDB is the first public agency to receive the Green Mark Platinum Award. PHOTO: HDB

INDIVIDUALS PLAY A PART

Implementing green buildings is easy, but 60 per cent to 70 per cent of its successful delivery comes down to user behaviour.



MR TAN PHAY PING from Building System and Diagnostics, a Singapore-based firm involved in overseas ventures.

Singapore firms making a (Green) Mark overseas

More building owners, tenants here also win Green Mark Awards in recognition of efforts

Derek Wong

Firms in Singapore are taking to the world their knowledge of how buildings can be made environmentally friendly, even as more building owners and tenants in Singapore are being recognised for their efforts in the greening of buildings here.

The Building and Construction Authority (BCA) last month gave out 420 Green Mark Awards, a significant increase from the 347 awarded last year. The Green Mark rating is given to buildings or tenants who meet certain standards of energy efficiency and good indoor environmental quality.

The Housing Board was given the Green Mark Platinum Award,

the first public agency to receive the award. Among its 21 Green Mark projects this year is SkyResidence @ Dawson, which has features such as energy-efficient lighting with motion sensors at staircases and separate chutes for recyclable waste at blocks.

BCA said close to 50 Singapore-based firms are also involved in overseas ventures, with about 300 Green Mark projects in 14 countries.

Building System and Diagnostics and G-Energy Global are among them. G-Energy Global's vice-president of business development Vin-

cent Low said it took him six months in 2007 to convince his first customer in Malaysia, the team behind the 30-storey G Tower hotel in Kuala Lumpur, to come on board.

"At that time, Malaysia did not yet have the culture of green buildings," Mr Low told The Straits Times ahead of World Environment Day on Tuesday. "We had to keep driving back and forth (for meetings) to convince them."

He added that the main contractor initially had misgivings, but was finally convinced by a detailed review that specified how much

savings the building would accrue with Mr Low's recommendations.

G-Energy also helped the hotel attain a Green Mark rating, leading to a media feature which boosted the hotel's branding, said Mr Low.

He said an energy services company, or Esco, accreditation from the Singapore Government also aided G-Energy's reputation in China, which helped to overcome initial resistance from some professional engineers there.

Mr Tan Phay Ping, co-founder of Building System and Diagnostics, said his challenge overseas is finding the right local partner.

Good partners tend to leave to form their own businesses, he said, so he has to find out how to motivate them to stay. On the other hand, in places like China and Malaysia, it is difficult to retrench poor employees due to labour laws.

"This is besides issues like taxation and language," he said.

But going overseas helps to diversify the business, said Mr Tan.

"When the economy is down, spending on sustainability is not a priority," he said.

Therefore, during a construction downturn in China, for example, he would turn the focus back to Singapore and farm out analysis and simulation work to his regional office in Chengdu, and vice-versa.

However, whether in Singapore or overseas, the responsibility still lies with building users to maximise the functions of a green building.

"Implementing green buildings is easy, but 60 per cent to 70 per cent of its successful delivery comes down to user behaviour," said Mr Tan.

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