



SGBC-BCA SUSTAINABILITY LEADERSHIP AWARDS 2019 • SWEETSPOT PARTNER CONTENT

Championing green buildings

The built environment needs to be more energy-efficient than ever as the world grapples with climate change

BY MICHELLE CHIN

It makes economic sense to go green. According to Dr Ho Nyok Yong, president of the Singapore Green Building Council (SGBC), the cost of building green buildings is decreasing steadily with the advancement of green building technology, new approaches to building design and the advent of sustainability-enabled services.

This addresses the perception that green buildings come with a high premium and will take a long time to recover the initial investment.

Dr Ho says: "Even though going green will cost more and affect building operations at the point of retrofitting, some of these concerns will be mitigated and reduced if the process is managed well, along with substantial benefits to human health and well-being."

Championing green building locally is SGBC, a local non-profit organisation celebrating its 10th anniversary this year.

"Green building is an approach to construction with an onus on environmental sustainability and human health and well-being. It takes into consideration the architectural design (including siting and orientation), engineering, construction, material selection as well as consumption of resources and energy," he adds.

Singapore has a national goal to "green" 80 per cent of its Gross Floor Area (GFA) by 2030 as part of its efforts to reduce carbon footprint and be more energy-efficient. Currently, about 40 per cent of local GFA has been greened.

One of SGBC's roles is to award certification to green building-related products and services locally

across six categories—architectural, civil and structural, mechanical, electrical, smart and landscaping.

More than 3,500 green building products and materials have been certified since 2010 in the six main categories and more than 80 sub-categories.

Furthermore, since earlier this year, SGBC and Building and Construction Authority (BCA) have been co-assessing BCA Green Mark projects, along with managing and upskilling Singapore's community of green building professionals through the SGBC Green Mark Professional Qualification Scheme.

SGBC has also organised more than 20 tradeshows since it was founded and an average of 15 seminars, workshops and knowledge sessions per year to connect the various players in the built environment's long supply chain from

product manufacturers to infrastructure builders.

In addition, it is the award co-organiser for the annual SGBC-BCA Sustainability Leadership Awards to recognise local individuals, project teams, companies and projects that have fared well in achieving environmental sustainability in the built environment.

The award categories are Green Building Individuals, Green Building Organisations and Green Building Projects. Each category has its own award sub-categories. These awards highlight the fact that there is a growing awareness of environmental and sustainability issues among individuals and businesses locally.

In fact, property developers have increasingly taken into account the falling green premium, the long-term cost benefits of green buildings such as lower utility bills and the health

advantages that green buildings pass on to their occupants, says Dr Ho.

For the next phase of its growth, SGBC will be focusing on two main areas — reducing carbon emissions and intensifying public outreach.

It is able to help the industry navigate embodied carbon reductions through its certification programmes primarily through the Singapore Green Building Product certification scheme, which necessitates a carbon footprint report for high-impact building products. Embodied carbon is the amount of carbon footprint of construction-related materials from extraction to production and disposal.

SGBC will also step up its efforts to share knowledge with the public to explain what green buildings are, and the actions residents can take to make their homes greener and healthier.



SGBC's launch of its 10th anniversary logo. PHOTO: SINGAPORE GREEN BUILDING COUNCIL