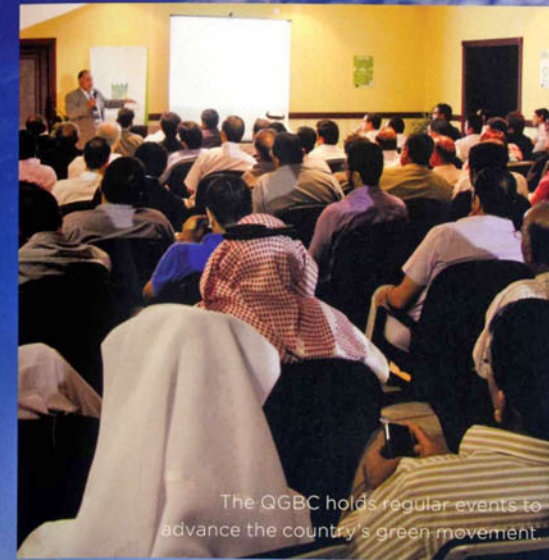


INTO THE GREEN

ANALYSIS

With sustainability a key priority for the 2022 World Cup, how green is Qatar's construction industry? Devina Divecha investigates



The QGBC holds regular events to advance the country's green movement.



With Qatar slated to build zero carbon stadia for the World Cup in 2022, the sustainability of the small state's construction industry will come under intense scrutiny.

At first glance it appears that sustainability is well and truly on the agenda; unlike other markets in the Gulf that focus on a single green building rating system, Qatar is utilising two: Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) and the Qatar Sustainability Assessment System (QSAS).

The LEED system, popular in many countries, has been modified to meet the climatic and cultural

needs of Qatar. Meanwhile, QSAS is growing in popularity in the local market. It was recently developed by BQDRI, a subsidiary of BARWA, in collaboration with the T.C. Chan Center at the University of Pennsylvania, USA. It is similar to LEED and considers the local cultural framework, climate conditions and environmental impacts.

Ibrahim Mohammed Al Jaidah, principal of Doha-based firm, Arab Engineering Bureau (AEB) and founding member of the Qatar Green Building Council (QGBC), spoke of the current move by Qatar to implement LEED and QSAS into projects.

"Sustainability is being demanded at the beginning of the design stage.

A number of projects are targeting LEED Gold or Platinum status. Qatar is also discussing QSAS legislation at the moment," he said.

Tony Morris, director at international engineering firm Hilson Moran, cited some examples of green projects and developers in Qatar. "One scheme that really has a sustainable agenda is Musheireb. The internationally-focused developers such as Barwa and Qatari Diar

are highly aware of sustainability and make it a part of their delivery."

Ahmed Abdulla Al Abdulla, CTO of Tanween and QGBC founder and member of its interim board of trustees, added: "Examples of green buildings include several Qatar Foundation projects, such as the Education City Residence Halls (LEED Platinum), Northwestern University (LEED Gold), and Convention Centre Exhibition Hall, which is nearing construction completion and seeking Gold LEED certification."

In addition, QGBC is in the process of developing the Green Villa Compound demonstration project, a fully sustainable community which is intended to be an educational, research and technical project which will champion low carbon energy and low water systems.

According to Al Abdulla, infrastructure practices are also changing to cater for more efficient waste management and conserving energy and

water using district cooling systems and smart technologies.

However, Qatar's green building industry also faces challenges. According to Al Abdulla there are many misconceptions among industry professionals regarding green building concepts, technology, cost, durability, quality and strategies. He maintained that continued education, provided by organisations such as QGBC, was important to remove any misconceptions.

Another challenge for Qatar's green building industry is commitment and effective collaboration. "Sustainable development has a number of stakeholders that need to collaborate and mobilise the green movement in many arenas. We in QGBC, through our Membership Programme, engage members and supporters through building business relations and promote the collaboration and coordination between all relevant parties and the govern-

ment to give momentum to the green movement," said Al Abdulla.

When it comes to the best rating system to adopt, the experts remain divided. Al Abdulla believes that QSAS is more suited to Qatar's construction industry. "QSAS is a very good system that satisfies the local community requirements efficiently, catering for Qatar's local environment, culture, and policies," he said.

Morris agreed: "LEED is less tailored to the region's sustainability needs. I think that QSAS is the first real indicator that the country is taking things seriously."

Al Jaidah, however, concludes that there is room for both systems due to the fledgling nature of the green building industry in Qatar. "Some projects are using LEED, so we're not just limited to QSAS. I don't think it matters that we are using multiple systems. The use of any green building system is good. We are in a learning curve now." ^

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