

Experts recommend Green Building Code

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Qatar - At the end of a vibrant exchange of views on whether the building industry was doing enough for the environment, the panellists recommended the setting up of a common platform comprising contractors, designers, education, financial institutions, government bodies, that would work towards minimising environment damages caused by indiscriminate construction activities.

The building industry is a major contributor to the country's economy. But it can have a negative impact on the environment.

It accounts for 17% of fresh water consumption, 30 to 40% of energy and 40 to 50% of raw materials.

The panel agreed that, there seems to be an urgent need for regulations to be revisited and the need for standards for Green Buildings and the Infrastructure. In this third edition of QTRT, the participants discussed the real issues, the actions that are viable, and ones that are not. What are the related costs of making sustainable buildings?.

The experts who brought their experience and opinion to the table, included, from the Ashgal, Environment Expert Ghazy El Sayed Abdel Kerim E Sherif and Director of Environment, Health and Safety, Eng Khalid Mohammed Al Emadi; Kahramaa, Customer Service Manager Engineer Ahmed Al Mohannadi; GHD Manager - Architecture Martin Hay; Tata Consulting Engineers Services, Chief Architect Nilima Sharma; Qatar Foundation, Director of Facilities, Mohammed Al Malki; HSBC, Head of Global Banking, Kapil Chadda; AEB Head of Electro-Mechanical Department Hani Hawamdeh; DPA Lighting Consultants Director, Barry Hannaford; from Philips Lighting, Chris Liebenberg, Channel Manager, and Ashok Vishwanathan, Business Development Manager and from Techno Q, Managing Director Zeyad Al Jaidah. The session was moderated by Engineer Issa Al Mohannadi, Development Director of Qatar Foundation/Doha Lands Company.

'If we ask ourselves whether we have a sustainable industry, the answer is No, but it is encouraging to note that steps are being taken. At the micro level of each building, design is a thought process comprising three factors, efficiency, comfort and performance,' for Vishwanath of Philips Lighting. 'And like a triangle, with one maximised, the other two suffer.'

'Lighting consumes 19% of all electricity in the world, an achievable saving of 40% on all the lighting currently installed in the Middle East would save €2.5bn in energy costs, the equivalent annual output of 12 power plants and 17.5 tonnes of CO2 per year. Efficient fluorescent lighting uses less energy and indirectly produces less CO2, increases the lamp lifetime and reduces the maintenance costs. A green switch is really effortless and could have a big impact on our environment,'

Adds Mr Zeyad Al Jaidah, Techno Q Managing Director.

'We (Doha Land and QF) have been engaged in the last four to five months to launch the Green Building Council and are in the last stages of the construction of this council. We encourage all contractors, designers, government institutions to come to this common stage and promote awareness of the need of such Green Building Initiatives. A healthy building code is being formulated and we will work with the Government for the regulations,'

said Issa Al Mohannadi.

'We urgently need a carrot and stick approach. At the local level, for instance, the initiatives taken by Supreme Council of Environmental Research (SCENR) which has looked at the industries and their impact on the environment, now needs to dovetail its concerns with Urban Planning to integrate and deepen the model of a good and sound checking. This is the stick part.' added Al Mohannadi.

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