

Fresh call to step up green building initiatives

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The importance of stepping up the development of environment-friendly green buildings in the UAE was stressed yesterday at the third annual "Cost-Effective Sustainable Design Construction" conference in the capital.

"The construction costs for green buildings is 22 per cent lower than for conventional ones," Bindiganavile Prashanth, Senior Development Manager at developer Rakeen, told **Emirates Business**.

"The importance of green buildings stems from the fact that they require fewer natural raw materials and save electricity. In addition, the metal panels used in these buildings can be used again after they are eventually demolished.

"Ras Al Khaimah and Abu Dhabi have shown the greatest interest in green buildings among the emirates. They have drawn up a guide as well as standards for these buildings that will be circulated widely over the next few years."

He said Ras Al Khaimah had begun drawing up standards in December 2007. A draft was completed in March 2008 and sent to Anders Manson, Vice-President for Innovation and Tech-Transfer at Ecole Polytechnique De Lausanne, a research and teaching university in Switzerland. The draft standards were published last October.

Salem Al Qassimi, Associate Planner of the Estidama sustainability programme launched by the Abu Dhabi Urban Planning Council (Adupc), gave details of the initiative to create more green buildings.

"Abu Dhabi is keen to expand in the green building sector," he said. "Our aim is to reduce the cost of construction and power and water consumption and extend the age of buildings in the capital."

Ebrahim Mohammad Abdullah, Managing Director of sustainable building company Boston, said: "The positives of green buildings are very clear. Metal and glass panels can be used as facades for buildings instead of concrete blocks. When the buildings become old, the panels can be removed, painted and reinstalled in new buildings, which saves a large amount of money.

"In Abu Dhabi and Dubai, there is great potential to construct green buildings and operate them with the least amount of power possible by using many types of renewable energy.

"The majority of property developments that will be constructed in Abu Dhabi will consist of environment-friendly green buildings. These buildings will contain devices minimising the entry of harmful rays, keeping the buildings cool and saving water and power."

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