

Only six green buildings in Dubai yet

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More than 450 structures await accreditation under LEED evaluation structure



Towers under construction at Dubai Marina. There is still no Dubai-specific rating system for sustainable buildings.

Dubai: It has been two years since buildings in Dubai were ordered to conform to sustainability standards to reduce their environmental impact on the city, but only six such buildings currently exist.

According to the Emirates Green Building Council, there are more than 450 buildings waiting for accreditation under the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) evaluation structure.

The LEED ratings system is one of many that any building seeking accreditation can opt for. Others include BREEAM Gulf.

Several governments have developed their own standards for green building or energy efficiency for buildings such as Estidama in Abu Dhabi, Minergie in Switzerland or Green Star in South Africa and New Zealand.

There is still no Dubai-specific rating system in place, according to Jeffrey Willis, chairman of the Emirates Green Building Council (EGBC) and co-director of Arup, Dubai. "New Building Regulations to cover minimum requirements to satisfy green building principles are currently being drafted by Dubai Municipality," he said. The Municipality recently issued requirements for green roofs.

However, minimum requirements as part of the Municipality's regulations for new buildings and those to be renovated do exist for Dubai in some areas, such as thermal performance of buildings, he said, and glazing and insulation.

In Abu Dhabi, the Urban Planning Council (UPC) has developed Estidama, a rating system which will apply to new and existing buildings and is being applied to a few pilot projects to test its effectiveness.

The UPC is also working on new proposals for building regulations in line with their proposal for Estidama, which will apply within the emirate of Abu Dhabi.

Willis said that the EGBC is a not-for-profit organisation and has no role in enforcement or sanction. EGBC provides a platform through its membership of major organisations for discussion of technical matters and assists in promoting awareness.

Voluntary standard

The LEED certification programme has been developed by the USGBC (US Green Building Council), which is a voluntary, consensus-based national standard for developing high performance, sustainable buildings.

LEED provides a framework for assessing building performance and meeting sustainability goals such as using recycled materials, reusing water and minimising water and electricity consumption. Variants exist based on locality.

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