

## **All eyes on UAE's bid to meet green challenge**

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**The world is watching how effective the UAE will be in overcoming the challenge of having one of the worst ecological footprints, construction industry executives have been told.**

Officials from Abu Dhabi and Dubai outlined new green building guidelines and regulations both emirates are to begin implementing next year at a special conference taking place as part of The Big 5 construction supply industry trade fair in Dubai.

The Big 5, which runs until Thursday, is the Middle East's biggest-ever event for the sector.

Pointing out that the nation has one of the world's worst ecological footprints, Holley Chant, a planning manager at the Abu Dhabi Planning Council in charge of Estidama, the emirate's sustainable building and community initiative, said "the world is watching" to see how the UAE introduces policies to bring about change.

"Abu Dhabi is establishing Estidama and Dubai is working on their guidelines but we have to meet the same targets of promoting conservation of health, energy and resources," she added.

Earlier, Adi Afaneh, senior environmental planner at Dubai Municipality, said in Dubai 75 percent of all electricity was consumed by buildings, both residential and commercial. Similarly, commercial and residential buildings were responsible for 85 percent of water consumption.

Dubai's new green building regulations will soon be submitted to the Executive Council which would decide the timetable for implementation, starting in 2009, Afaneh added.

The regulations will apply to all new buildings initially but eventually will be extended to cover existing buildings as they are renovated.

Conference chairman David Baggs, Technical Director of Ecospecifier International, said the sector suffering less from the downturn in the construction industry worldwide was green buildings.

Building in a sustainable manner was being seen as "future proofing your assets," he said.

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