Regional Champions of Green Building to receive Awards

A total of 112 Award Submissions from 15 countries were received for the inaugural WorldGBC Asia Pacific Regional Network Leadership Awards in Green Building, a testament to the increased emphasis on green building in recent years.

Organised by the World Green Building Council, this biennial Awards honour outstanding organisations for their commitment to sustainability, and celebrate innovative green building projects. The Awards are sponsored by Shaw Contract Group and supported by the Business Council for Sustainable Development – Singapore and World Bank Group - International Finance Corporation.

Comprising the Business Leadership and Design & Performance Award Categories, the Finalists for each will be announced in mid-August 2014. Following which, the Singapore Green Building Council (SGBC) will host the first ever Awards Presentation Ceremony during its 5th Anniversary Dinner on 3 September 2014, where the Winners amongst the Finalists for each Award Category will be unveiled.

Growing the Green Economy

At the beginning of 2014, Minister for Environment and Water Resources Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan announced that the Ministry of Environment and Water Resources (MEWR) will lead a national exercise to review Singapore’s environmental sustainability strategies. The exercise would also involve the refreshing of the Sustainable Singapore Blueprint (SSB), outlining new targets, strategies and investments to ensure that Singapore remains liveable and sustainable well into the future.

As part of this exercise, the Singapore Green Building Council (SGBC) took part in a study on the Green Economy segment of the SSB, coordinated by the Economic Development Board (EDB). SGBC members were invited to send in their comments on how the green economy can be grown in tandem with our environmental sustainability efforts.

One of the key challenges brought up by respondents was the cost involved in adopting widespread sustainability initiatives. Espousing such measures is usually cost sensitive, requiring additional work, significant capital investment and maintenance fees. In addition, rising business costs have also distracted companies from investing much thought and capital into sustainability initiatives.

Another challenge faced by companies is the inertia towards adoption of such measures. Currently, there is a lack of market and product information, and companies generally have little knowledge on the various government incentives available for using sustainable initiatives. The incentives themselves also fall under a number of different agencies and bodies covering different sectors, and a suggestion is for a centralised inter-agency body to manage these incentives, thereby increasing awareness and subsequent uptake.

Study respondents have also indicated that more government-to-government collaboration is necessary to improve knowledge and adoption of sustainability initiatives, in addition to increasing synergy between industry stakeholders to consolidate and streamline broad-based sustainability approaches.