



## **Green Building Council of South Africa releases first of the Green Star SA Environmental Rating Tools**

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The Green Building Council of South Africa (GBCSA) has released the first tool in the Green Star SA green building rating system toolset: **Green Star SA – Office PILOT**. The tool assesses the environmental performance of buildings on a range of issues including energy, water, materials and emissions, and provides an objective assessment of how “green” a building is. Green Star SA is a voluntary green building rating system under which developers may apply to have their projects rated and certified by the GBCSA, and there has been enormous interest from the commercial property industry. The tool is published on the GBCSA website (<http://www.gbcsa.org.za/greenstar/ratingtools.php>) and will be available in pilot form until 1 September for testing and public comment. Interested parties can download the tool, and feedback is welcomed. The tool will then be finalised and formally launched in early November from when the GBCSA will begin accepting submissions for projects to be certified and receive a Green Star SA rating.

The objectives of the Green Star SA rating tools are:

- To provide an objective framework and standards for the measurement of green building
- To establish a common language and act as a guide to building green
- To recognise environmental leadership

In doing this, Green Star SA will:

- promote integrated, whole-building design,
- raise awareness of green building benefits,
- reduce the environmental impact of development

The Office PILOT rating tool can be used to assess the environmental attributes of new commercial office buildings as well as major refurbishments of existing office facilities across South Africa. It can be used at the design phase (“Design rating”), or on building completion as well as post-construction phase (“As Built rating”). It comes at a time when there is huge demand from the South African property industry for guidance and standards on how to build more green and more energy-efficient buildings.

The Green Star SA tool is designed to be used by owners, developers and consultants (architects, engineers, quantity surveyors, project managers, building contractors etc.) to influence the design of office facilities. The tool enables these stakeholders to minimise the environmental impacts of their developments, and to receive recognition for their design initiatives.

The Green Star SA tool is based upon the Green Building Council of Australia’s Green Star tools and has been customised for South African conditions. The customisation process involved an international sustainability consultant (the previous Green Star director of the GBC of Australia), local consultants Arup and

a voluntary Technical Working Group made up of leading local experts. The team went through an intensive process of evaluating all credits for their suitability and adaptation to the South African market. Credits were amended; several new credits were added; and category weightings were adjusted in response to current market conditions and environmental concerns in South Africa.

Once finalised the Green Star SA – Office tool will allow for certification of office buildings, based on the following levels of achievement:

- 4 Star Green Star SA Certification - "Best Practice"
- 5 Star Green Star SA Certification - "South African Excellence"
- 6 Star Green Star SA Certification - "World Leadership"

Green Star SA - Office PILOT is now available for download on the GBCSA website at <http://www.gbcsa.org.za/greenstar/ratingtools.php>. The PILOT phase will run until 1 September, 2008, and the final version of the tool will respond to the feedback received. The industry is urged to contribute through the online form available at <http://www.gbcsa.org.za/greenstar/officepilot.php>.

After the PILOT period, the GBCSA will collate and assess the feedback received, and the final tool will be released as Version 1 at the GBCSA Convention & Exhibition '08 on 2-4 November, at the CTICC in Cape Town. The first Green Star SA Accredited Professional training courses will take place the following day on 5 November 2008 – this course trains property professionals in the use of the rating tool. More information is available on this event at [www.gbcsa-convention.org.za](http://www.gbcsa-convention.org.za).

The Green Star SA – Office tool provides a framework for green building design and construction as well as a basis for rating and certification of green office buildings throughout the country. The tool is supported by Associate financial sponsor South African Cities Network. Future tools for other building types, including Retail and Multi-Unit Residential buildings will be developed during 2009.

For more information about Green Star SA, certification and professional accreditation, please contact:

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