

Green Building Council Launches 2nd Green Star Rating Tool for Retail Centres

Following the successful launch of the Green Star SA environmental rating system for office buildings in 2008, the Green Building Council of South Africa (GBCSA) has released the much anticipated Retail Centre rating tool, the second in the suite of Green Star SA rating tools now available.

“Developers and owners of retail centres can now use the tool, which was developed by a voluntary Technical Working Group, in conjunction with the GBCSA and lead consultants the WSP Group, to ensure they have considered all aspects related to green building and ultimately have their building certified as a 4, 5 or 6-star Green Star building,” explains Jason Buch, Technical Manager of the GBCSA.

“The Green Star SA Retail Centre rating tool was specifically tailored to assess the design of new and refurbished retail centres, completed retail centres as well as extensions to retail centres. In particular, it takes into consideration the complete base building, including structure and HVAC, electrical and plumbing systems, common areas, amenities, food courts, community facilities, car parks, loading docks, and site areas.”

“It does not cover individual tenant fitouts,” continues Buch. “These will be covered by a separate tool for Interiors, which is part of the future tool development plans of the Council.”

The GBCSA develops rating tools according to market demand and raises funding specifically for each tool. “Interest in green building and sustainability hasn’t slowed, despite the economic downturn, and feedback from the property industry indicated a demand for this retail tool - funding for which was made available by Liberty Properties, Pareto Limited, the South African Cities Network (SACN) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC),” says Nicola Douglas, CEO of the Council.

“Liberty and Pareto represent two of the biggest shopping centre owners in South Africa. This strong endorsement from the mainstream retail portfolio owners is very encouraging, as they represent some of the power players in the industry, who can effect change most rapidly due to their size and influence,” explains Douglas.

“The SACN represents the nine largest cities in South Africa, providing an important link to municipal government and ensuring their involvement and knowledge of the process.”

The SDC has implemented a Climate Change Mitigation Programme in South Africa, focusing on energy efficiency in the building sector and to this end has dedicated resources to assisting the GBCSA in its rating tool development programme.

According to Douglas, this combination of funders is a great example of how South African and international business, government and civil society are combining their efforts to address our most pressing issues. “Through the Green Building Council initiative, the resources and experience of all these players, both local and international, can be combined to create market-driven solutions.”

“The GBCSA officially launched the tool at member-only events held in Cape Town and Johannesburg this week and will also be providing additional information by way of detailed technical presentations and related case studies at our third annual Convention & Exhibition, which takes place at the CTICC from 20-22nd September October,” concludes Douglas.

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