

QATAR GREEN BUILDING COUNCIL'S INAUGURAL CONFERENCE TO USE NOVEL IDEAS TO REDUCE CARBON FOOTPRINT

Qatar Foundation Member Is Taking The Lead In The Promotion Of Sustainable Construction Practices

Doha, Qatar, 19 April 2015 - Excessive CO₂ emissions leading to climate change, largely resultant from fossil fuel energy generation, is perhaps the most serious of the challenges that threaten the long-term sustainability of the world today. Efforts at reducing energy consumption are particularly important, especially so in Qatar, as figures show that its carbon footprint, or CO₂ per capita, are amongst the highest in the world. Although Qatar's contribution to world CO₂ emissions is relatively small, its aspirations regarding sustainability, as set out in the Qatar National Vision 2030, are extremely high and consequently Qatar's role as an exemplar has become increasingly important to its international standing.

So what is to be done? In most developed and developing countries, between a third and a half of delivered energy is consumed in the built environment. Energy conservation measures within both new buildings and the existing building stock are therefore likely to significantly reduce Qatar's carbon footprint.

Although the MENA region still lags behind other markets in terms of overall sustainability, the adoption of 'green building practices' has gained momentum in recent years. Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF) has been at the forefront of this enlightened development in Qatar, the region and internationally, supporting and encouraging a range of initiatives from research to education. QF's response to advance sustainability in the built environment was to establish the Qatar Green Building Council (QGBC) in 2009 from which it has incrementally increased its outreach and prominence, year on year.

This year, QGBC is holding its first annual Qatar Green Building Conference on 27 and 28 April which will bring together local, regional and international professionals and experts from industry, academia, NGOs, the public and Government. QGBC will demonstrate its commitment to sustainability by measuring and reducing the carbon footprint of the Conference itself, bridging the gap between rhetoric and practice.

Ms. Jane Anderson, QGBC's lead carbon foot printing specialist and Principal Consultant at Thinkstep, a worldwide leading environmental consultancy group with subsidiaries across four continents, will be measuring the conference's carbon

footprint using a variety of techniques and processes. Thinkstep, previously known as PE International, is one of the largest and most respected sustainable consultancies in the world through its work advising organisations and governments.

The carbon footprinting techniques that will be applied include measuring the operational energy consumed per square metre of conference area, the consumption of food and beverages, as well as the distance travelled by participants and their mode of transportation among other activities.

The findings of the carbon footprint study will feature in a comprehensive sustainability report to be released after the conference that hopefully will inspire other event organisers, businesses, companies and institutions in Qatar and the region to follow suit.

While considered as a priority, QGCB's commitment to measuring and reducing the carbon footprint is, however, just one of the conference's objectives.

It will also highlight QGBC's role as an industry thought leader and provider of a collaborative umbrella that all organisations interested in the future sustainability of Qatar's built environment can work together under. While the conference is an opportunity for QGBC to strengthen its established relationships, it is also a forum to facilitate key partnerships with all sector stakeholders, especially those between industry, innovators and academia.

Pursuing this agenda, QGBC has sought to not only produce an academic conference, but also to include an exhibition of new green technology. This provides ample opportunity for the industry's 'green innovators' to present examples of their work in a series of seminars, parallel to the main conference. International experts will also be on hand to network at a series of breakfast one-to-one sustainability clinics.

Bolstering Qatar's position as the emerging environmental sustainability hub in the region, hundreds of architects, engineers, academics, urban planners, innovators, landscape architects, green building product entrepreneurs, manufacturers and suppliers, project managers and property consultants have already signed up for what promises to be a unique learning event that is free to attend. Prompt registration is advised as places are limited.

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About Qatar Green Building Council

Qatar Green Building Council (QGBC) is a non-profit, membership-driven organization providing leadership and encouraging collaboration in conducting environmentally sustainable practices for green building design and development in Qatar. QGBC also aims to support the overall health and sustainability of the environment, the people, and economic security in Qatar for generations to come. The council, a member of Qatar Foundation, was formally established in 2009 by a decree signed by H.H. Sheikha Moza Bint Nasser and is helping Qatar on its journey to establish a post-hydrocarbon, knowledge economy and progressive society. Through QGBC, Qatar joins a network of 80 countries that run active national green building councils under the umbrella of the World Green Building Council.

QGBC's members include, representatives from government, real estate developers, investors, facilities managers, consultants, constructors, manufacturers & suppliers, oil & gas, professional firms, financial services, telecom/technology, academia, NGOs & media.

QGBC is setting up operations from its HQ, organising awareness events, knowledge seminars, training, forums, and networking sessions with the like-minded. To learn more visit www.qatargbc.org.