



WORLD GREEN BUILDING COUNCIL

Europe Regional Network



# What is green building and why does it matter?

For today's Europe, green building represents one of the most significant and exciting opportunities for sustainable growth on both a national and a global scale. The design of our built environment impacts us all, as well as our economies and the natural environment, and Green Building Councils are driving its transformation towards sustainability.

## The design...



**...of our homes** is fundamental to our quality of life, comfort and how affordable they are to run



**...of our workplaces** impacts employee productivity, health and the prosperity of our companies



**...of our schools** leaves a life-long imprint on those who learn within them, influencing pupil concentration and how environmentally aware the next generation is



**...of our hospitals** affects patient recovery times and national health service bills



**...of our cities and communities** strongly determines their economic and social dynamics



# Green building...



## Takes an intelligent approach to energy

- Minimising energy use in all stages of a building's life-cycle, making new and renovated buildings more comfortable, less expensive to run and helping building users learn to be efficient too.
- Integrating renewable and low carbon technologies to supply buildings' energy needs, once design has maximised inbuilt and natural efficiencies.



## Safeguards our water resources

- Exploring ways to improve drinking and waste water efficiency and management, harvesting water for safe indoor use in innovative ways and generally minimising water use in the sector.
- Considering the impact of the built environment on stormwater and drainage infrastructure, ensuring these are not put under undue stress or prevented from doing their job.



## Minimises waste and maximises reuse

- Using fewer, more durable materials and generating less waste, as well as accounting for a building's end of life stage by designing for demolition waste recovery and reuse.
- Engaging building users in reuse and recycling.



## Promotes health and well-being

- Bringing a breath of fresh air inside, delivering high indoor air quality through good ventilation and avoiding materials and chemicals that create harmful emissions.
- Incorporating natural light and views to ensure building users' comfort and enjoyment of their surroundings, reducing lighting energy needs in the process.
- Designing for ears as well as eyes. In the education, health and residential sectors, acoustics and proper sound insulation play important roles in helping concentration, recuperation, and peaceful enjoyment of property.
- Ensuring people are comfortable in their everyday environments, creating the right indoor temperature as the seasons pass through passive design or building management and monitoring systems.



## Keeps our landscape green

- Recognising that our urban environment should preserve nature, ensuring diverse wildlife and land quality are protected or enhanced, for example by remediating and building on polluted land or creating green spaces.
- Looking for ways we can make our urban areas more productive, bringing agriculture into our cities.



## Creates resilient and flexible structures

- Adapting to a changing environment, ensuring resilience to events such as flooding, earthquakes or fires so that our buildings stand the test of time and keep people and their belongings safe.
- Designing flexible and dynamic spaces, anticipating changes in their use over time and avoiding the need to demolish and rebuild or significantly renovate buildings to prevent them becoming obsolete.



## Connects us

- Creating diverse environments that connect and enhance communities, asking what a building will add to its context in terms of positive economic and social effects and engaging local communities in planning.
- Ensuring transport and distance to amenities are considered in design, reducing the stresses of personal transport on the environment, roads and railways and encouraging environmentally friendly options such as cycling.
- Exploring the potential of smart technologies and ICT to communicate better with the world around us, for example through smart electricity grids that understand how to transport energy where and when it is needed.



## Considers all stages of a building's life-cycle

- Seeking to lower all environmental impacts and maximise social and economic value over a building's whole life-cycle: through design, construction, operation, maintenance, renovation, and demolition. The fragmented nature of the building industry value chain means we have long looked at parts of the life-cycle in isolation, but Green Building Councils are bringing the sector's whole value chain together through our members to build a wider vision.
- Making the invisible visible. Embodied resources are the invisible resources used in buildings: for example, the energy or water used to produce and transport the materials in the building. Green building considers these amongst a building's impacts, ensuring that our buildings are truly low impact.

# Why does it matter?

## Generating sustainable growth

The buildings sector is a driver of GDP, and green building offers an opportunity for increased output with decreased impact. Global construction output is predicted to grow significantly by 2020, and with markets moving towards greater resource efficiency, policy makers have a central role to play in ensuring European companies are at the forefront of the global green buildings market.

## Creating jobs

Europe's construction industry employs tens of millions of people, but it also suffers from a skills shortfall. Attracting talent and investment is one of the key challenges ahead. Green building offers a chance to be part of the solution to global challenges, to explore new and exciting technologies and to learn skills that will stay relevant.

## Increasing energy security and reducing fuel poverty

Europe's oil and gas imports cost us hundreds of billions of euros each year. Higher energy efficiency across our countries' buildings will help reduce this unnecessary cost, as well as decreasing the need for new expensive national infrastructure. Personal energy security is also important, and those whose fuel bills represent a significant portion of income are helped by increased efficiency too.

## Improving the delivery of public services

The power of strong public sector leadership on green building is not just about helping lead the wider market. Green building can lower the cost of running public buildings, increase the efficiency of service delivery and help create the right environment to retain and foster the brightest talent.

## Adding and retaining financial value

Green buildings attract sales and rental premiums, help reduce capital expenditure and mitigate the risk of regulation requiring costly alterations to buildings. Energy and water efficient buildings also save businesses and consumers money during the lifetime of the property.



# Introducing the Europe Regional Network

Green Building Councils are not-for-profit, member-based organisations that are driving the transformation of buildings, communities and users' behaviour towards sustainability. The World Green Building Council is a coalition of over 90 national Green Building Councils around the world, making it the largest international organisation influencing the green building marketplace.

Our Europe Regional Network consists of over 30 national Green Building Councils and works in collaboration with more than 3,500 member companies across Europe, which represent the full breadth of stakeholders in the buildings industry. A crucial part of green building is bringing the whole value chain in our industry together to provide better solutions, and this is exactly what we are doing through our members.

## Established Councils



## Emerging Councils



## Prospective Councils



## Associated Groups

Bosnia & Herzegovina | Denmark | Estonia | Iceland | Luxembourg | Norway | Portugal | Slovakia

## Regional Partners

