Global Sustainable Buildings Index - Singapore

Green Certification

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# Is there a nationally adopted and recognized form of certification for buildings? What is it and is it mandatory for all new buildings and refurbished buildings?

**Background and the 1st Green Building Master Plan**

Singapore’s Building and Construction Authority (**BCA**) - a Ministry of National Development agency established by the Building Control Act - released the 1st Green Building Master Plan in 2005. It details a phased approach to "green" both new and existing buildings in Singapore. The 1st Green Building Master Plan introduced a Green Mark Incentive Scheme rating system to assess new public sector buildings and those undergoing major retrofitting in terms of the following five key criteria:

Energy efficiency

Water efficiency

Environmental protection

Indoor environmental quality

Innovative green features

Points are awarded to buildings incorporating environment-friendly features that are better than normal practices. The overall assessment and point scoring determines which of the four existing BCA certifications will be awarded. The following are the BCA certifications arranged from the highest to the most basic rating: (i) "Green Mark Platinum"; (ii) "Green Mark Gold (Plus)"; (iii) "Green Mark Gold" and (iv) "Green Mark Certified."

The Building Control Act was amended in April 2008, which led to the issuance of the Building Control (Environmental Sustainability) Regulations 2008 and the Code for Environmental Sustainability of Buildings (now in its third edition). These regulations required the following types of new or existing buildings to achieve a basic Green Mark certification:

All new buildings with a gross floor area of 2,000 square meters or more

All existing buildings undergoing addition or extension work to increase gross floor area by 2,000 square meters or more

All existing buildings with a gross floor area of 2,000 square meters or more that are undergoing major retrofitting

**The 2nd Green Building Master Plan**

In 2009, the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Sustainable Development created a nationwide strategy requiring 80% of all Singapore buildings to reduce energy use and emission production, and achieve a Green Mark Certified rating by 2030. In response to this strategy, the BCA released an expanded 2nd Green Building Master Plan imposing higher certification requirements, which are as follows:

All new public sector buildings partly funded by the government with more than 5,000 square meters of air-conditioned gross floor area must achieve the highest Green Mark Platinum rating. This category includes hospitals and universities.

Building projects proposed in new growth areas will have to meet either the Green Mark Platinum or the Green Mark Gold (Plus) rating to ensure that private developers build outstanding, high-quality and distinctive green structures.

All existing buildings owned by government agencies must meet the Green Mark Gold (Plus) rating by 2020.

The Building Control (Environmental Sustainability Measures for Existing Buildings) Regulations 2013 and the Code on Environmental Sustainability Measures for Existing Buildings (first edition) have extended the requirements to achieve a basic Green Mark certification when installing central water-cooled or air-cooled chiller, or replacing it with a unitary air-conditioning system. These extended requirements apply to the following types of buildings:

Hotels, retail buildings and office buildings with a gross floor area of 15,000 square meters or more

Mixed-use developments (excluding industrial, port or airport facilities) with a gross floor area of 15,000 square meters or more

**The 3rd Green Building Master Plan**

In September 2014, after consultation with industry stakeholders and input from the 3rd International Panel of Experts on Sustainability of the Built Environment, the BCA developed the 3rd Green Building Masterplan to accelerate the pace of green building development. The BCA noted that since the launch of the BCA Green Mark scheme in 2005, the number of green buildings in Singapore has grown exponentially. From only 17 in 2005, green buildings grew to more than 2,100 in 2014, which translates to about 62 million square meters of gross floor area, equivalent to 25% of the total built-up areas in Singapore. As of September 2015, BCA reported that more than 2,500 buildings are now Green Mark certified. This translates to 29% of Singapore’s total built-up gross floor area. Based on these figures, the BCA estimates it is on schedule toward meeting the target of greening 80% of all of Singapore’s buildings by 2030.

The 3rd Green Building Master Plan intends to undertake the following:

Establish the BCA as the leader for green building advancement in the industry and region through the following methods:

Building research, development and demonstration capabilities

Use of the BCA Green Mark scheme as the green building rating tool of choice in the tropics and sub-tropics

Setting industry standards to achieve zero or net positive energy low-rise buildings and low energy high-rise buildings

Introduce a new "Green Mark Pearl Award" to recognize collaborations between developers, building owners and tenants that would successfully increase green tenanted gross floor area to between 50% to 70% for each building

Remove information barriers through monitoring, sharing of information and demonstrating building energy performance through the following initiatives:

Monitoring buildings’ energy consumption to encourage proactiveness in energy-efficiency improvements and sustainable energy consumption behavior of building occupants and users

Mandating minimum environmental sustainability standard upon the installation and replacement of building cooling system (This is applicable to both single and mixed-use developments of hotel, retail and office buildings with gross floor area of 15,000 square meters).

Performing energy audit on the cooling systems of buildings to ensure systems operate throughout its life cycle (This is applicable to existing buildings that have undergone major energy-use change on and after 2 January 2014).

Reviewing various building codes to achieve good indoor environmental quality and ensure Green Mark-certified facilities conduct regular indoor air quality audits

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