

Sustainable Design Collective - India

Tuesday 29th November 2022 at Haworth Showroom, Bengaluru

Core Team:

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Purpose:

A 'think tank group made up of professionals from the A&D, IPC and developer community in Bangalore, committed to acting as a collective within the workplace design community to identify developments and 'best practice' relating to sustainability. This report highlights some of the points raised during the two-hour discussion.

Meeting 4: Standards and Certification

The 4th meeting aimed at taking a deep dive into the certification opportunities and penetration in India.

Current scenario – USGBC certifications like LEED & WELL are well entrenched and pervasive in India. However newer certifications, like Net zero, are new and just starting to gain some traction]



- There is no common forum/platform for architects and MEP engineers to educate everyone and take the sustainable journey forward.
- Is a top-down approach needed? – Do corporates / occupiers need to mandate sustainability certifications like Net Zero in their RFPs so that the service providers are forced to fall in line?

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- Is chasing certifications the right path? Earlier structures, designed centuries ago, were naturally sustainable and regionally vernacular. All modern buildings, irrespective of climate, are designed with glass enclosures and then we reverse engineer and try solving HVAC / energy problems. Passive design tweaks like insulated walls towards the west direction are basic sustainability measures.
- Certifications, like LEED, have a premise of adding a layer of checks and balances, whereas these are design principles which should be applied from the start and not only to be a check box to be ticked off.
- What is the meaning of Net Zero and which certifications can we go for?
- If certifications are just boxes to be ticked by clients, how do A&D question, 'push back' and engage with clients on what could be the minimum requirements if the same could be enmeshed into the design to achieve the energy saving required without an added layer of 'certification'. And how does this get balanced with the increasing need of corporates to report their energy emissions as part of their ESG goals?
- A project can achieve LEED Platinum even if we do not cover supplier information, fabrics, furnishings etc. How do we manage a more simplified approach where we don't need a certification consultant? Is it that we have become dependent on this process, rather than asking basic questions as conscious designers? Architects and designers should initiate this mindset change and need to push, ask questions so that we dive deeper rather than going through the motions.
- Ingenious materials or locally manufactured products can be specified but are we compromising on quality? A good balance would be to use older products as a far more sustainable option.



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- Operational carbon emissions – in India we are still nascent on this. A handful of projects have been certified for Net Zero and we have a long way to go as compared to the UK.
- Sustainability consultants are aware and possess the requisite knowledge. Designers, on the other hand, are eager to understand and implement more but there is a gap which needs to be bridged between the two cohorts.



Sustainability Presentation by Haworth:

Haworth presented their approach to circular design – ensuring each component that goes into a product can be repaired, replaced, or disposed of in a responsible manner. Their end-of-life program is being started in India. 80% of a Product’s Ecological Impacts are locked in at the design phase.

Product Environmental Data Sheets (PEDS) are available for most Haworth products and provide lifecycle information, such as parts and material composition, recycled content and recyclability, manufacturing and logistics conditions, certifications, and material chemistry disclosure.

By 2025 Haworth is committed to circular services which will include take back and buy back, remanufacture, and recycle, resale and donate, lease and rent.

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- Upcycling costs are not cheaper than new product costs. Warranties are also affected in such cases. Supportive client partners who can, however, take an executive sponsorship of a project like this will give the entire initiative some impetus.
- Success stories and exemplars should be highlighted and promoted so that the industry sits up and take notice and someone says – “We should be doing this too!”
- Imported versus indigenous: Most of us in the room drive imported cars! If, as designers, we make sustainability a prime requirement, in the same way that customers are willing to pay more for safety features in a car, clients will go for sustainability features.

Next Meeting

EPD agenda to be rolled over to Meeting 5,