

SBC: Bringing the green culture in Greece

What are the main features of sustainable (green) buildings in Greece? What is the cost of building green? Are appropriate materials and experienced workforce available? Why are most green buildings located in Attica? Akis Kekridis, Executive Director of Sustainable Building Council (SBC) Greece explains

Constructing a green building is quite similar to constructing a “traditional” building. If experienced sustainability professionals are involved early in the design process, then it will be easier to include sustainable characteristics with no additional cost and the final product will obtain green certification.

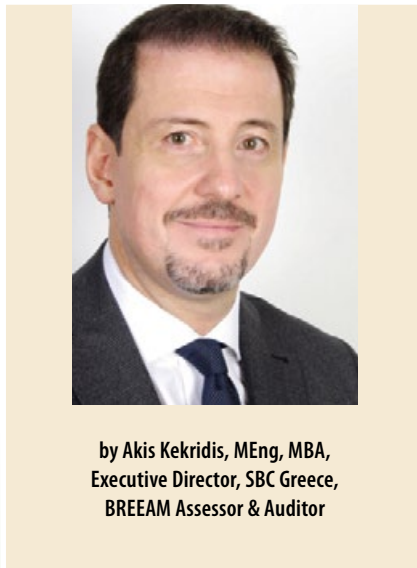
With regards to workforce, it is a fact that professionals of the built environment in Greece are of high quality. Despite this, they are being called upon to adapt and respond to a rapidly changing environment, with sustainable development.

Finally, there are new materials introduced in the market which have sustainable characteristics, abide by the European and national regulations (e.g. have reduced carbon emissions) and are used in modern constructions in Greece.

Universal philosophy

The main features of sustainable (green) buildings in Greece are not different than of those in other countries, since the definition and philosophy of green buildings are universal. Some of their main characteristics are:

- They use materials with sustainable and environmentally friendly characteristics (i.e. they do not have high carbon emissions).
- They have good and frequent access to public transportation (hence reducing the need to use a car and



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- also reducing carbon emissions).
- They make use of natural lighting, which improves the health and well-being of the users and reduces the need to use artificial lighting (and electrical power).
- They use modern and smart electro-mechanical systems for heating and cooling in order to achieve the best internal conditions with reduced energy consumption and therefore reduced carbon emissions.
- They have significant planting features, which contribute to the ecological value of the building site and vicinity.
- They monitor water consumption and apply measures to conserve it (for example they use flow restrictors in taps to control water flow and reduce consumption).

The cost

With regards to new constructions, and providing that the design and the specification are that of a typical good quality building in the Greek market, it should not be difficult for a building to obtain a green certification, and it would not incur additional costs (compared to the average construction cost that applies in the Greek market).

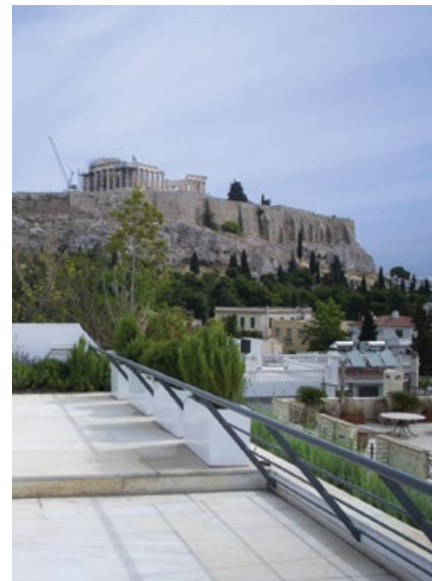
This can also be achieved if experienced sustainability professionals are involved early in the process for guidance. For an existing building under the process of renovation, the improve-

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ments required may vary depending on the condition of the asset, but the cost to obtain a green certification according to a widely recognised standard (for example BREEAM – GOOD or LEED – GOLD) is small compared to the total renovation cost, which should make it an obvious choice for any interested party. It should be noted though that, if the target is to obtain a higher certification category, improvement costs can slightly increase.

Attica's lion's share

The fact that the lion's share of "green" certifications are for buildings in Attica, is due to a number of reasons: first, the fact that big real estate owners and developers have their portfolio and development activities in the Attica area and therefore the number of buildings undergoing a sustainable certification process is larger. Secondly, most foreign investors have Attica (or the Greater Athens area) as their primary target especially for office buildings, which is the most common type of certified building. To all the above, we can add the fact that a green certification is not among the priorities for asset owners in the rest of Greece, as they primarily focus on more classic construction products (a block of flats or a traditional office building). As a result, there are very few certified buildings in these areas (e.g. Thessaloniki, where there is a small number of certified assets). However, this trend may change, since information and knowledge about sustainable buildings is spreading fast in Greece in recent years.



EREN Athens Offices building is a 700m² project which included the conversion of an old residential building into modern offices. The building is in close proximity to the Athens Acropolis and was certified with LEED in 2014



The Hellenic American Educational Foundation (HAEF) preschool & kindergarten is an educational facility certified with LEED v3 Schools in 2014. It is the only educational building in Greece with "green" certification

> SBC GREECE

The green building culture is not yet as widely established in Greece as in the Western Europe countries (or even the Central Europe ones) but this changes rapidly.

Sustainable Building Council Greece (SBC GREECE), member of the World Green Building Council (WGBC) is contributing to the establishment of a sustainable building culture in Greece by promoting and advocating for the green certification standards in the Greek authorities and institutions as well as among the market stakeholders.

Green Building Councils are independent, non-profit organisations made up of businesses and organisations working in the building and construction industry. **bf**