

Sustainable Buildings and Climate Initiative

Promoting policies and practices for the built environment



Who is UNEP-SBCI?

The United Nations Environment Programme-Sustainable Buildings and Climate Initiative (UNEP-SBCI) serves as an international platform for stakeholders to jointly carry out activities supporting sustainable development and provide direct input to organizations, governments, and global bodies making recommendations and decisions affecting sustainable development in this sector, e.g. global initiatives for the finance and insurance sectors, or secretariats for multilateral environmental agreements.

Why Buildings?

Globally buildings are responsible for 40% of annual energy consumption and up to 30% of all energy-related greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The building sector has also been shown to provide the greatest potential for delivering significant cuts in emissions at low or no-cost or net savings to economies. Collectively the building sector is responsible for one-third of humanity's resource consumption, including 12% of all fresh-water use, and produce up to 40% of our solid waste. The sector also employs, on average, more than 10% of our workforce. With urbanization increasing rapidly in the world's most populous countries, building sustainably is essential to achieving sustainable development.

UNEP-SBCI works to promote policies and practices for a sustainable built environment. This is a joint effort with key stakeholders in this sector (industry, business, governments, local authorities, research institutions, academia, experts, and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)).

Mission

UNEP-SBCI's mission is to represent the common voice of the building sector, using UNEP's unique capacity to provide a global platform for collective action.

Action

COMMON PLATFORM

UNEP-SBCI has shaped an international work program to research building performance baselines to guide policy and present a common voice of the building sector on key global issues. Leading building sector stakeholders including policy-makers, cities, developers, designers, constructors, manufacturers, non-profits, research institutions and others are working together to provide:

- Original research report: The Kyoto Protocol, the Clean Development Mechanism and the Building and Construction Sector;
- Official submissions to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) on ways of supporting the building sector to reduce GHG emissions;

Goals

To achieve its mission of promoting a worldwide adoption of sustainable buildings and construction practices, UNEP-SBCI is implementing its work plan guided by the following goals:

1. Provide a common platform.
Provide a global platform for dialogue and collective action from building sector stakeholders to address sustainability issues of global significance, especially climate change.
2. Develop tools and strategies.
Develop tools and strategies for achieving a wide acceptance and adoption of sustainable building policies and practices throughout the world.
3. Establish baselines.
Establish globally acknowledged baselines based on a life-cycle approach, with a first focus on energy efficiency and GHG emissions.
4. Demonstrate through pilot projects.
Participate in, inform and support policy developments recognizing the role of buildings for mitigation and adaptation to climate change at local, national and/or global levels.



UNEP

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Promoting Policies and Practices for Sustainability

www.unep.org/sbci

- An industry 'Call to Action' on Buildings & Climate Change;
- Ten international workshops and side-events at UNFCCC conferences;
- Development of the 'Common Carbon Metric': An international agreement on the calculations for measuring energy use and reporting building-related GHG emissions; and
- Consensus on the core sustainability performance issues as the basis for the Sustainable Building Index for the building sector.

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PERFORMANCE BASELINES

A key barrier to mainstream implementation of sustainable building is a lack of performance baseline data for informing policy-making and industry innovation. UNEP-SBCI has responded by producing fundamental baseline studies including:

- Buildings & Climate Change (2007) and Buildings & Climate Change: Summary for Decision-Makers (2009);
- Regional Baseline GHG Emissions and Reduction Potential of Buildings reports: (Mexico, South Africa & India). New baseline reports are needed for China, Jordan, USA and Brazil; and
- Assessment of policies for reducing GHG emissions from the Building Sector (2007).

TOOLS & STRATEGIES

Through baseline research and international multi-stakeholder dialogue UNEP-SBCI has identified and developed tools and strategies for supporting the mainstreaming of sustainable building.

- Policy Support: The web-based 'Quick-Scan Tool' for identifying policy packages that can cost effectively deliver major reductions in building related GHG emissions: www.unep.org/sbci/resources/Tools.asp
- Monitoring & Reporting: Now under development - The UNEP-Sustainable Building Index; a framework of common core performance indicators, such as energy, GHG emissions, water, materials, waste, biodiversity and economics, supported by measurement tools, reporting protocols and verification processes.

Get Involved

VALUE

UNEP-SBCI is supported and guided by its membership. Members of UNEP-SBCI benefit from:

- Being recognized as international leaders in the field of sustainable buildings and the high profile of working with the United Nations;
- Guide and directly influence international debates, policy-makers, and have a voice at high-level international fora including UNFCCC;
- Access to the best expertise and latest knowledge in sustainable building technology and building performance; and
- Network with the world's experts and leaders in sustainable buildings.

IMPLEMENTATION

Working with the United Nations Environment Programme provides a unique opportunity to develop tailored projects leveraged with international funding. In the past 3 years UNEP has raised \$15 million to deliver projects that implement UNEP-SBCI outputs:

- SUSHI – the Sustainable Urban Social Housing Initiative is drawing on the findings of UNEP-SBCI research and expertise to find the most cost-effective strategies for improving energy-efficiency in low-cost housing in Sao Paulo, Brazil and Bangkok, Thailand;
- SPOD - Sustainable Buildings Policies in Developing Countries will use the 'Quick-Scan Tool' to help African countries develop and implement policies that improve energy-efficiency and reduce GHG emissions from their building sector; and
- Pilot of the Common Carbon Metric – Commencing in 2010, selected cities and building portfolio owners will use the UNEP-SBCI protocol (developed with the World Resources Institute) to create GHG emissions and energy intensity baselines for their building stock. These baseline reports will provide an essential foundation for policy-making.



MEMBERSHIP

To become a member, organisations express their interest by registering with the UNEP-SBCI secretariat and making their contribution, which is used to fund the work programme, administration and management of the Initiative. The membership is structured as follows:

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|------------------------|-----------------------|
| • Partner/Donor | Greater contributions |
| • International Member | US\$ 30,000 |
| • National Member | US\$ 15,000 |
| • Member | US\$ 5,000 |

Contact

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