

UN includes buildings in global carbon reduction

The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has acknowledged the need for a unified approach to reporting and measuring carbon emissions from the built environment.



Credit: istockphoto

In late 2010, Dr Gajanana Hegde from the UNFCCC's Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) team, announced a shift in the UNFCCC's approach that would enable CDM participants to fully capitalise on the carbon-reduction potential of buildings.

Under the CDM, emission-reduction (or emission-removal) projects in developing countries can earn certified emission-reduction credits. These saleable credits can be used by industrialised countries to meet a part of their emission-reduction targets under the Kyoto Protocol.

'In most countries, buildings are the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions,' says Chief Executive of the World Green Building Council (WorldGBC), Ms Jane Henley.

'While the building sector has the greatest potential for delivering emissions cuts, at the least cost, buildings have been largely overlooked in the current international commitments for tackling climate change.'

Ms Henley expects that the rating tools for buildings being developed through the WorldGBC's existing Common Carbon Metric project will also play a role, by providing independent verification of the quality of CDM building projects.

'The Common Carbon Metric project has the potential to act as a real stimulus and support a range of green building projects in developing nations – from large scale retrofit programs through to new building projects,' says Ms Henley.

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