

“Target issues” for sustainable construction

The Holcim Foundation for Sustainable Construction is committed to the “triple bottom line” concept, which asserts that long-term and sustainable progress requires the balanced achievement of economic development, environmental performance and social advancement.

Based on this concept and to make sustainable construction easier to understand, evaluate and apply, the Holcim Foundation and its renowned partner universities have identified a set of five “target issues” for sustainable construction, which serve as a basis for the Holcim Awards and for other activities of the Holcim Foundation.

Innovation and transferability

The project must demonstrate innovation at the forefront of sustainable construction. Breakthroughs and trend-setting approaches, irrespective of scale, must be transferable to a range of other applications.

Innovative concepts regarding design, integration of materials and products, structure, enclosure and building services.

Outstanding approaches regarding construction technology and processes, operation and maintenance.

Contributions to the disciplines of architecture, urban and landscape design, civil, urban and environmental engineering and other related fields pertaining to construction.

Long-term monitoring to evaluate the fulfillment of the initial expectations and goals.

Dissemination of knowledge (project documentation and communication, education and training).

Ethical standards and social equity

The project must adhere to the highest ethical standards and support social equity at all stages of construction, from planning and building processes to long-term impact on the fabric of that community. The project has to provide an advanced response in terms of ethical and social responsibility.

Adherence to ethical standards in all phases of the project's life cycle.

Contributions to the formation of socially viable environments and the values of communities.

Participation of stakeholders (client, users, neighborhood, local authorities, non-governmental organizations and others).

Quality of working conditions in the suppliers' workshop, on site and during operation (compensation, safety, basic needs, gender issues).

Political transparency and correctness.

Environmental quality and resource efficiency

The project must exhibit a sensible use and management of natural resources throughout its life cycle, including operation and maintenance. Long-term environmental concerns, whether pertaining to flows of material or energy, should be an integral part of the built structure.

Low environmental impacts over the project's life cycle.

Energy and material efficiency in construction, operation and maintenance.

High ratio of renewable energy to fossil energy in construction, operation and maintenance.

Land use efficiency.

Robust products and technologies.

Economic performance and compatibility

The project must prove to be economically feasible and innovative as far as the deployment of financial resources is concerned. Funding must promote an economy of means and be compatible with the demands and constraints encountered throughout the construction's life span.

Innovative models for financing.

Financial resources over the project's life cycle and their regional impact.

Flexibility with regard to future changes (user, ownership, laws and regulations).

Robustness to economic conditions (interest rates, taxes, inflation).

Economy of resources deployed in construction.

Contextual and aesthetic impact

The project must convey a high standard of architectural quality in the way it addresses cultural and physical factors. With space and form of utmost significance, the construction must have a lasting aesthetic impact on its surrounding environment.

Improvement of existing contextual conditions responding to the natural and human-made contexts.

Interdependencies of landscape, infrastructure, urban fabric and architecture.

Cautious restoration and alteration of the built environment.

Programming strategies (use, flexibility, multiplicity of functions, change).

Architectural quality and its aesthetic impact (space, form, light, ambiance).