

START AND IMPROVE YOUR GREEN CONSTRUCTION BUSINESS TRAINING PROGRAMME

The Start and Improve Your Green Construction Business Training Programme is a comprehensive entrepreneurial and management training programme for owners and managers of existing and emerging contracting businesses in the construction industry.

It consists of thirteen modules that introduce basic principles of good contracting business management in a simple and practical way with a focus on green construction.



THE WORLD OF GREEN CONSTRUCTION

The course is designed to introduce you to the wide variety of opportunities that exist in the green building sector.

The goal is to provide:

- clear,
- easy to apply guidelines and
- useful practices that you can readily introduce into green construction, renovation, and building operations.

The world is going green, we hope that you will be inspired to start or improve your green construction business activities after engaging with the course.

STARTING YOUR OWN BUSINESS

Starting up your own business is a long road but also rewarding in itself. **With the right ideas, skills, attitudes and support** you can materialize your business ideas and be a successful entrepreneur.

One crucial aspect for starting entrepreneurs is to establish themselves in markets which show potential for growth and expansion. One of these markets is the green building construction sector.

Green construction has benefits at environmental, social and economic level, for the contractor, the clients, the homeowners, and the tenants renting space in green buildings.

GREEN CONTRACTING

Green contracting is becoming the norm and materials and technologies are more easily available and increasingly at lower costs. With higher investments in green building activities, entrepreneurs worldwide (like you!) are constantly developing innovative, local, green solutions to cater for an increasing market demand.

Green construction can be justified from an environmental perspective:

- climate change,
- scarce resources,
- energy efficiency,
- sustainable use of material

This training is about business and how to become a successful green contractor!

WORLD GREEN BUILDING COUNCIL RESEARCH

A recent study conducted by the World Green Building Council¹ (2013) showed that there is an increasingly compelling business case for green buildings. The evidence highlights that green buildings are not just about saving the planet but sustainable buildings make clear business sense.

These days, green buildings can be delivered at prices comparable to those for conventional buildings and many costs can be recouped through operational costs savings. Developers that incorporate green building designs, technologies and materials into their projects have a significant market advantage over their “notso-green” competitors. Green buildings do not have to cost more than conventional buildings; much can be achieved at low cost through good design and the use of basic energy, efficient materials.

There is no prescribed roadmap for going green as a contractor. Green comes in many different shades and forms, and differs in ease or difficulty level to apply.

The options available depend on your interest, skill level and experience, and your decision where you want to fit in.

TWO FUNDAMENTAL ASPECTS

There are two fundamental aspects you should consider before we move on to business and technical related aspects of green building.

“What is meant by ‘green building construction’?”

“What are the options related to green buildings?”.

Guiding principles of green construction

Green buildings should contribute to the following aspects:

Economic

- Contribute to long term cost savings
- Generate financial benefits

Socially

- Be locally appropriate and utilize locally sourced materials and skills
- Use resources efficiently and effectively
- Implement sustainable procurement
- Maximize the health, comfort and well-being of users

Environmentally

- Conserve the natural environment
- Reduce as much as possible the use of non-renewable resources and promote renewable and passive energy sources
- Use materials with low energy consumption in the production process
- Provide high levels of insulation
- Minimize waste

The world of green materials and technologies is fast evolving and a myriad of definitions exist regarding what is green construction .In brief, green construction can be understood as an environmentally friendly way in constructing a building. Thus, not constructing ‘any’ building but a building which in itself is more environmentally friendly in terms of materials used and technology installed (the manual will guide you through what are considered green materials and technology).

Most importantly green buildings provide financial benefits that conventional buildings do not. The cost benefits include energy and water savings, reduced waste generation, improved indoor environmental quality, greater employee comfort and productivity, reduced health costs and lower operations and maintenance costs.

DECIDING WHERE YOU FIT IN GETTING STARTED WITH GREEN BUILDING CONSTRUCTION

Before we move on to business related aspects, you will have to decide where you ‘fit’ into the world of green construction. If you do not know yet, don’t be concerned, just take note of Figure 1 and browse the many options available.

Shown in Figure 1 (below) are some of the many business possibilities that exist in green construction. Your choice will be influenced by your skills level, the green building category or interrelated categories you want to focus on, and which green building component or components you want to engage with.

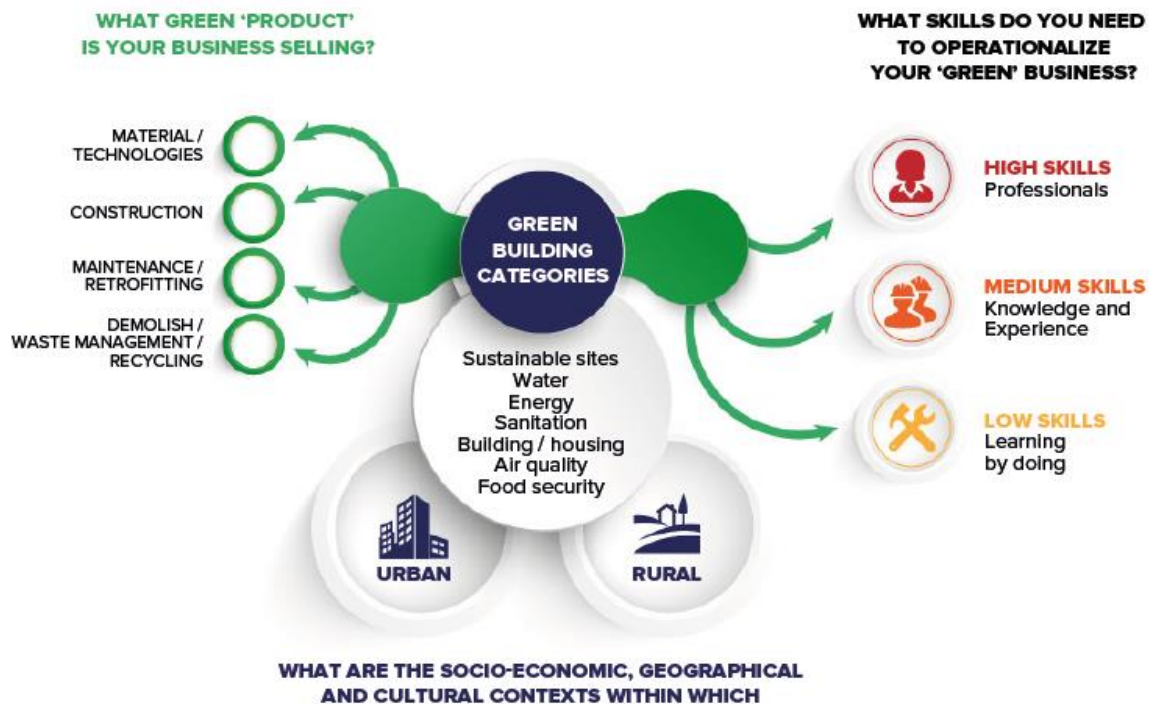


FIGURE 1 Finding your way in the green construction world

Guidelines to consider before starting or improving your green construction business

The broad categories of green construction are: site selection, water, energy, sanitation, buildings, air quality and food security.

The general components of a green construction life cycle include **green design** and/or innovation, **technologies, materials, construction process, maintenance** and/or retrofitting, and **demolishment** (waste management and recycling). Your focus can be on one or more of the categories and/or components.

- Green building is not only reserved for the high skilled professional. Many green building activities can be learned. A little bit of 'green' enthusiasm and experience will bring you far in achieving confidence in starting and improving your green business. Your skill level will influence the **type of service** you can supply or/and which **technologies** you are going to focus on.
- Decide who are your **clients**? Your skills level and type of service you are providing will determine your client base and market. Many opportunities exist in the 'formal' high income, green construction sector, but many business opportunities are found also in the less formal and lowincome sector (see the sections on food security and selfbuilt greening systems). With a little bit of knowledge and keen interest, anybody can make a success in building towards a greener future.
- What are the **socio-economic, geographical and cultural contexts** within which you are going to operate? Green construction in rural areas might differ in applications from those in urban areas. Thus, find a local solution for the social, economic and geographical area you are doing business in. Involve the community or green implementation team from the beginning. Real 'green' sustainability responds appropriately to the local context, and creates sustained benefits for the community in the long term. Green construction is process focused and not just product-focused.