

Building for the Future

There was a time when man designed and produced massive wonders of engineering that towered over cities in overpowering statements. Through the modern age, big buildings went up and today continue with bridges, dams and skyscrapers.

As society evolved and matured, mankind has realised the damage its construction projects are exerting on the environment and this new awareness has created an increasing urgency to preserve, conserve, restore and sustain.

Limited resources

"Nature's resources are limited," Victor Bouguenon, marketing manager at AfriSam, points out. "We have to conserve and use them wisely and nowhere more importantly than in construction. At AfriSam we realised over 15 years ago that we had an enormous responsibility to promote sustainable development and were the first cement producer to develop an environmental policy, long before environmental and 'green' building issues became widespread."

AfriSam's proactive approach led the way in reducing dust emissions, using less coal, enhancing energy utilisation and introducing ground-breaking technology which resulted in pioneering products for the construction industry. Since 1990, AfriSam has successfully reduced its carbon footprint by more than 34%.

Quality not compromised

The investment in research and development has seen the manufacture of Eco Building Cement, which more than halves the world's average carbon footprint for cement without compromising on the quality demanded by SABS for cement in this strength class.

Not content with this achievement, AfriSam is adding its weight and expertise to the newly evolving "green" drive for sustainability in architecture and construction by developing or supporting such programmes as the AfriSam-South African Institute of Architects' (SAIA) Awards for Sustainable Architecture and the Construction World Best Projects Awards.

Victor says, "We are witnessing a move towards environmentally responsible design. It is an attempt to integrate human activities with natural systems in a holistic manner.

"We are encouraging architects and their clients to look at architecture with new eyes," he adds. "As with the Construction World Best Projects Awards, we

want to put human and environmental needs and considerations back into design and construction."

He points to the innovative use of concrete at Freedom Park, winner of the 2009 Construction World Best Projects' Award in the AfriSam Sustainable Construction category as a prime example of restoring the human dimension to architecture while making optimum use of environmental conditions.



Victor Bouguenon

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