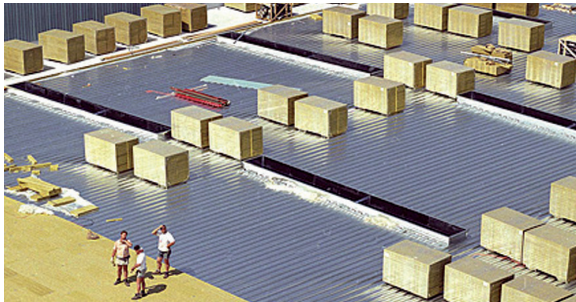


## Can Malaysian Buildings Get a Gold?



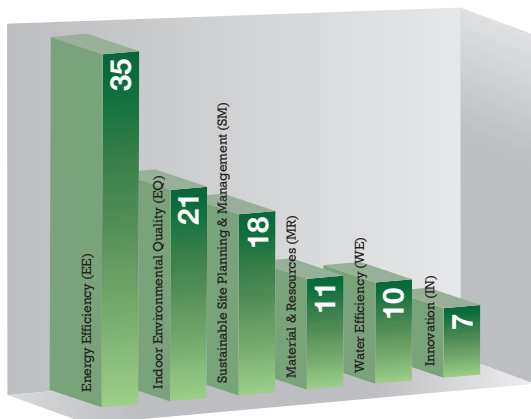
For the past few weeks, the Malaysian media has given a lot of coverage to the Green Building Index (GBI). Why has it garnered so much interest? To begin with, the GBI green rating system for buildings serves to highlight a growing realisation that amidst shrinking resources and rising energy demand and costs, the buildings of the future will have to be more energy efficient and ecologically friendly.

In the US and Europe, it has been scientifically proven that buildings are responsible for 40% of the energy consumed, which very likely is also the case in the Asian context. Additionally, according to the World Green Building Council, the production of construction materials, plus the energy needed to power, heat and cool buildings are responsible for 33% of all global carbon emissions. Reducing energy consumption in buildings is therefore highly beneficial for the environment. Making buildings “green” is not only about being environmentally responsible, it can at the same time yield huge savings for building owners by reducing households’ energy consumption used for cooling their indoor environment. Going green therefore, represents real cost savings, and building owners are increasingly demanding energy efficient buildings and solutions.

The GBI program initiated by Pertubuhan Akitek Malaysia (PAM)

is a voluntary rating system, which specifies the standards that a building must meet before it can be considered “green”. GBI certification system gives industry professionals the necessary means to get their buildings certified as platinum, gold, silver or certified rating - depending on the scores achieved. Among one of the most critical aspects taken into consideration while rating a building is energy efficiency. To achieve maximum points in this area, market professionals can reach for an easy, effective and proven solution for buildings – the use of insulation in the roof, wall or facade of a building.

The introduction of the GBI, arguably long-awaited by various parties in the construction industry, follows in the footsteps of similar green rating systems in other countries such as Australia’s Green Star and Singapore’s Green Mark. With the GBI, architects can now employ a standard method to measure how “green” or ecologically sound the designs of their buildings are. And investors will also know how green the buildings they purchase are!



The GBI Non-Residential Rating tool evaluates the sustainable aspects of buildings that are commercial, institutional and industrial in nature. This includes factories, offices, hospitals, universities, colleges, hotels and shopping complexes. Buildings are rated on a point-scoring format and depending on their score, can be awarded GBI Platinum, Gold, Silver and Certified ratings.

Of the six criteria that make up the GBI rating, emphasis is placed on energy efficiency and indoor environmental quality as these have the greatest impact in the areas of energy use and well-being of the occupants and users of the building.

\* Sourced from GBI website. For more information, visit [www.greenbuildingindex.org](http://www.greenbuildingindex.org).

### BE READY FOR AN INSULATION BOOM

So, how will the implementation of GBI influence the insulation market in Malaysia?

It all starts with an increase in the general awareness of the need for more energy efficient and ecologically sound buildings. In response, architects will need to design “greener” buildings by using readily available, cost effective and proven solutions and technologies to achieve better energy performance.

The Malaysian government will hopefully also support these market trends, and implement necessary changes to the building-by-laws in the near future.

Whereafter, the market will then need to adapt to the new situation. Both building owners and architects will have to consider insulation as not just a “nice to have” material, but instead as an integral part of the energy efficient solution for building envelope. Many may then seek reliable information and advice from available sources such as distributors, contractors and manufacturers about the benefits and product characteristics of insulation materials. It is vital for the future success of the business to have a sound understanding of how insulation can make a difference. But it is also as important to have relevant product offerings to present to contractors and architects who are seeking to achieve the GBI ratings, as well as to end-users who want to enjoy the benefits of living in an insulated and “green” home.