

singapore

S\$50m fund launched to make buildings 'greener'

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PUBLISHED:02 SEPTEMBER, 4:02 AM

SINGAPORE — Building owners and their small and medium enterprise (SME) tenants can now offset the cost of retrofitting spaces to make them more environmentally-friendly, such as by switching to energy-efficient lighting and air-conditioning systems, through a new S\$50 million kitty announced yesterday as part of the 3rd Green Building Masterplan.

The target of the latest master plan for the next five to 10 years is to change the behaviour and practices of end-users, following the emphasis of the first two master plans on making new and existing buildings “greener”.

To this end, the Building and Construction Authority’s (BCA) new incentive scheme will fund up to half of the retrofitting cost, totalling about S\$3 million for owners of buildings and not more than S\$20,000 for occupants and tenants.

In addition, new awards — the Green Mark Pearl and Pearl Prestige Awards — were also introduced to recognise buildings that have adopted green leases and where at least 50 per cent of tenant spaces have obtained a Green Mark certification.

Green leases are contracts that contain clauses on environmentally-friendly targets which building owners and tenants commit to achieve, for example, a specified reduction in energy consumption.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the Singapore Green Building Week yesterday, Minister for National Development Khaw Boon Wan noted that the new master plan will take Singapore's greening efforts "beyond the building structures and hardware".

He hopes the new incentive scheme will result in greater collaboration and engagement between government agencies, developers and building owners and tenants, who are the end-users. The BCA hopes at least 80 per cent of all buildings here will achieve a Green Mark certification by 2030.

The existing Green Mark rating system will also be reviewed to increase the focus on users, design considerations for the tropical climate and the indoor environmental quality, among others. More details on the new rating system will be revealed at the end of next year.

The need for building users to play their part in greening efforts was reflected in the

findings of the inaugural BCA Building Energy Benchmarking Report released yesterday, which showed that tenant and occupant activities within a building account for up to 50 per cent of the total electricity consumption.

The report assesses green building efforts based on data gathered from the mandatory submission of energy consumption for commercial buildings.

CKE Manufacturing, an SME which manufactures oil and gas components, hopes to tap into the scheme as it plans to install integrated monitoring systems to monitor its energy consumption patterns.

Other financing schemes in the market require a minimum electricity bill. This makes it difficult for SMEs to qualify, said its enterprise development manager Kwan Li Feng. "With this BCA scheme, it should be able to cover a wider group of business owners of different sizes," he added.

Developer Lend Lease, which operates [313@Somerset \(mailto:313@Somerset\)](mailto:313@Somerset) and several other malls, is one firm that has implemented green leases with regard to several of its tenants.

However, Mr Rod Leaver, its chief executive officer for Asia, noted that it could be a challenge for tenants if their leases were shorter than the payback period for retrofitting energy-efficient features.

Yesterday, Mr Khaw also announced that S\$52 million will be set aside for the Green Buildings Innovation Cluster to develop and test new green building solutions that are applicable to the tropics.

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