

IFC and SA developers explore Edge-certified green housing projects in Joburg

Representatives from the International Finance Corporation (IFC), and two South Africa property developers last week visited innovative affordable housing projects in Johannesburg being certified by Edge, the green building certification developed by the IFC, the private sector arm of the World Bank.



Source: Supplied. Carel Kleynhans, chief executive officer of Divercity; Kushinga Kambarani, green building consultant, IFC; Lenore Cairncross, green building lead for Africa, IFC; Diep Nguyen-van Houtte, senior manager for climate business at IFC; and Richard Dube, investment associate, Divercity.

Inkanyezi Village in Katlehong and Wisani Heights in Soweto are two projects by Alleyroads Holdings, an award winning, national-scale property developer and landlord with a focus on creating sustainable green affordable housing.

The third project site visited on Tuesday, 3 October was Jewel City, in the heart of old Johannesburg, being developed by Divercity, a property developer transforming entire neighbourhoods of former office buildings to affordable urban housing to combat urban sprawl. The new green homes will reduce energy and water consumption, as well as embodied carbon used in building materials, by at least 20%, the minimum standard for Edge certification.

While touring the housing development sites, Diep Nguyen-van Houtte, senior manager for climate business at IFC commented: "It has been inspiring to see these affordable housing developments first hand and to hear about the motivations behind designing and building to green and socially inclusive standards.

“Edge wants to champion the message to developers that retrofitting is also possible for existing buildings to make them more resource efficient and accessible, as well as with new builds where margins and budgets for innovation are traditionally lower. IFC’s innovative solutions support a full range of property types.”

In 2022, Alleyroads became an Edge champion after committing more than 200,000 square meters for Edge certification, and the first property developer in South Africa to certify a project through Edge version 3 which has a stricter benchmark than the previous version 2.

Alleyroads chief operating officer, Ivan Pretorius commented: “One of our ambitions is to become the first residential developer in Africa to have a zero-carbon certified property development. We currently have 21 projects which we’re in the process of certifying with Edge, including several existing buildings alongside new developments in our portfolio.

“I am particularly proud of our status as an IFC Edge champion, which means that our developments are constructed in an environmentally conscious way with significant water- and energy savings compared to traditional building methods.”

Transforming Jewel City

Diversity has targeted a collection of buildings adjacent to the Maboneng precinct, now called Jewel City. Jewel City has become a favourite filming location for adverts and even Hollywood movies, providing an unexpected income stream as companies have paid to advertise in the neighbourhood due to its high visibility both nationally and internationally.

Carel Kleynhans, chief executive officer of Diversity Urban Property Group added: “Most developers hesitated to invest in this part of the city, but we saw the opportunity not only to provide both affordable and energy-efficient housing but to improve the whole neighbourhood around our development, creating safe play areas for children and a walkable neighbourhood which has a real sense of community.”

About 70% of new-building in South Africa is in the residential sector and 85% of all Edge certifications are residential. Edge (certified by GBCSA) dominates the residential green-building certification market with more than 90% of certifications.

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