

# A GREEN CHAPTER

SUNIL TYAGI and SURABHI BHOLA explain how government intervention in green initiatives will benefit the environment and give properties a good positioning in the market.

With the development of green buildings in India, the idea of rating and certifying has also taken shape. Green buildings are certified by the Indian Green Building Council (IGBC) on the basis of the magnitude of criteria achieved by the developer in constructing and developing the building with the globally accepted LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) rating system. A corresponding home-grown system, Green Rating for Integrated Habitat Assessment (GRIHA), has also been developed. Obtaining a certificate or rating is not mandatory but can greatly influence positioning in the property market. Also, to date there is no law that mandates or promotes the construction of buildings using green practices. Some states have initiated efforts and incorporated procedures to make the installation of solar heating panels and rainwater harvesting system mandatory for some buildings in sync. Haryana has made the installation of rainwater harvesting systems compulsory in new buildings irrespective of the roof area. In Delhi, solar water heating systems have been made mandatory for various categories of buildings located on plots of 500 sq m and above. Similarly, Himachal Pradesh, Mumbai, Rajasthan, Port Blair, Bengaluru and Ahmedabad have also introduced relevant policies on rainwater harvesting.

## Encouraging green habits

To motivate green building, a two-pronged strategy can be adopted. The first being an incentive-based approach and the second, the enactment and enforcement of codes, policies and bylaws relating to adoption and use of sustainable and energy-efficient methods and materials while constructing, maintaining and operating a building.

An incentive-based approach would include granting lucrative incentives such as extra FAR, extending concessions in fees for regulatory approvals and sanctions, reduction in premium rates of land or properties, property tax benefits, low interest rates for loans. The incentives can be for builders, buyers and manufacturers of eco-friendly materials or equipment and technologies.

## Government benefits

The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has made it mandatory under its Energy-Efficient Solar or Green Building Scheme for projects to be certified by GRIHA to avail financial benefits and subsidies. It has also extended incentives for urban local bodies who announce property tax rebate for buildings rated under GRIHA. It has made it compulsory to get new government and public sector buildings rated under this system and sign a MoU with the GRIHA secretariat in the presence of the ministry for large-scale promotion of green buildings in the area. Benefits are also available to architects and design consultants. In fact, the CPWD has made it mandatory that all its constructions will be green and follow GRIHA.

Recently, the Noida Authority has decided to grant an extra FAR of 5 per cent without any additional costs to builders opting for eco-friendly constructions. The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) has recently proposed extra FAR and ground coverage for green buildings. It is also reviewing Delhi's Master Plan 2021 and is contemplating green building incentives.

## Biophilic trends

Globally, Singapore had introduced a limited period incentive scheme for distribution of funds to builders of

new green buildings, and in Chicago, builders adopting green concepts get expedited approvals and reduced approval fees. The Bureau of Indian Standards has proposed to amend the existing National Building Code to incorporate the new Chapter 11: Approach to Sustainability. The proposed amendments provide guidelines for builders in planning, designing, constructing, operating and maintaining buildings to reduce their negative impact on the environment. These include guidelines on site assessments, design of building and landscape, water and waste management, external lighting designs, green roof system, design of windows and doors, construction materials, appropriate walls, etc.

However, there is a need to frame comprehensive legislation governing the adoption and implementation of green practices by builders in the construction, operation and maintenance of the buildings and providing for penalties or sanctions in case of deviations or non-compliance. Countries such as Dubai, New York and Singapore have introduced legislations to promote the use of green practices in construction and development of buildings. They also keep a check on the standards of practices adopted by builders and provide for sanctions in case of violations. While bringing in green legislation in India, legislations of other countries can be reviewed and best practices adopted. | CW |

(For the full version log on to [www.ConstructionWorld.in](http://www.ConstructionWorld.in))

**About the authors:** SUNIL TYAGI and SURABHI



BHOLA are Senior Partner and Senior Associate respectively at Zeus Law Associates.



To share an interesting case study pertaining real estate and construction industry, write in at [feedback@ASAPPmedia.com](mailto:feedback@ASAPPmedia.com)