

It is all in the attitude

What is sustainability really? Is it all about installing the latest and greatest "green" technologies? Is it about using recycled products? Is it about recycling product or is it actually about the right attitude?

Yes, many projects show that new technologies are considered from the outset to ensure that buildings or precincts are as green and sustainable as possible. However, there is also evidence that, using conventional products and technologies, significant steps can be taken towards sustainability.

Attitude is, therefore, key in encouraging sustainability – not only of the project owner but all people involved: the designer, the contractor or the end user.

Even in a building or precinct where there is no specific green technology, awareness of the impact of business activities, in terms of sustainability, makes a difference. Switching off lights and reducing hot-water use does not require special technologies but commitment.

Companies could make use of established routes to, for example, recycle used office supplies by printing on both sides of a page and then sending it away for recycling instead of just throwing it away.

If office space is constrained, employers could investigate the possibility and practicality of allowing employees to work from home. The environmental cost savings would be realised in the reduction of time spent travelling and carbon emissions from a vehicle, among other health and wellbeing benefits.

This fifth edition of *Sustain* focuses on a wide variety of projects – from pre-planned sustainable projects to initiatives where a mere change in attitude has made the difference. Projects covered also include water saving in well-known companies, such as ArcelorMittal and Avis, energy-saving projects which could cover entire cities, green buildings such as the new Grain Building and the steps South Africa's mining industry is taking towards becoming more sustainable.

In previous editions, the major focus was on South African projects. However, lessons could be learned from international projects and changes in global policy. Each division of *Sustain*, therefore, includes a new news section. The European Wind Energy Association, for example, is canvassing for various changes in the use of renewable resources while Natural Resources Canada has launched its Green Mining Initiative. We also ensure that the reader can follow these initiatives on the Internet by providing the necessary links.

It is evident that, over the past five years since the first edition of *Sustain* was published, sustainability has become more than just a once-off concept but a topic which will increase in importance as time goes by.