

# Gulf Business

gulfbusiness.com / MARCH 2023



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THE SOLUTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

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WOMEN IN BUSINESS: SHINING THE SPOTLIGHT ON THE REGION'S RISING STARS AND BUDDING ENTREPRENEURS



# ON A GREENER PATH

ZĀZEN PROPERTIES' MADHAV DHAR SHARES INSIGHTS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE MARKET

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**How important is sustainability to the real estate industry, and what do you think is driving this shift towards sustainable development?**

Sustainability is essential. Developers are seeing the benefits of implementing sustainable-centric features in their projects with urban development's driving approximately 40 per cent of global carbon emissions via construction. All industries are responsible for helping the UAE realise its sustainability agenda and the real estate sector will become increasingly involved in this effort - especially as the population grows.

**How do you see the real estate industry evolving over the next decade around sustainability, particularly in light of the COP28 conference?**

There has been an uptick in LEED-certified developments around the world, primarily due to the US Green Building Council's long-standing credibility as a green rating system, and the cost-saving benefits that such builds offer developers and end-users.

From 2015 to 2018, LEED-certified developments saved approximately \$1.2bn in energy, \$149.5m in water, \$715.3m in maintenance, and \$54.2m in waste. LEED-certified projects also contribute to a 34 per cent reduction in carbon footprint and this resulted in a 152 per cent increase in such residential developments being deployed globally from 2017 to 2021.

As it relates to the UAE, the country was the world's sixth most LEED-certified country in 2021 with 73 projects spanning a total of 13,733,832.33 square feet. The UAE government cited that 121 LEED-certified buildings rose as a byproduct of Expo 2020, 103 of which were LEED

THE GLOBAL CONSTRUCTION SECTOR IS REPORTEDLY ON TRACK TO WITNESS 85 PER CENT GROWTH BY 2030

85%  
GROWTH

2030

2022



**MADHAV  
DHAR**

CO-FOUNDER AND COO

ZĀZEN PROPERTIES



**“OUR LATEST DEVELOPMENT, ZĀZEN GARDENS IN AL FURJAN WILL BE THE FIRST LEED GOLD CERTIFIED AND ‘WELLBEING INTEGRATED’ DEVELOPMENT IN THE AREA, THAT IS BUILT WITH THE HIGHEST STANDARDS AND WITH NO COMPROMISE TO SERVICES OR AMENITIES FOR OWNERS”**

Gold. These efforts are mapping out the country’s sustainable future and combatting the challenges of global warming. With many LEED developments existing on the same plot as Expo 2020, where COP28 will also be hosted, this will help reinforce the importance of sustainable real estate.

**What are some of the key challenges facing developers and investors who want to prioritise sustainability in their projects, and how can these challenges be addressed?**

Sustainability in real estate starts from conception through to design and development, and developers face several challenges when implementing sustainable practices within their projects. An unavoidable obstacle to any development is climate change. Varying temperatures, rains and snowfall can damage buildings and affect the efficiency of a development’s infrastructure. Similarly, concrete waste and general waste are known to be the two biggest categories of waste during the construction and operation of assets. The list goes on, but all of these factors must be accounted for from planning through execution.

Another regional challenge is not having easy access to sustainable raw materials such as timber used for construction across Europe or North America. Also, the environmental constraints of high temperatures make it essential to use more cooling and air conditioning in this region, when compared to certain parts of Europe and North Africa.

**What are some of the most innovative and effective sustainable design and construction practices you have seen in this industry?**

The global construction sector is reportedly on track to witness 85 per cent growth by 2030, and 36 million new housing units

are projected to be built in the world’s top 20 cities by 2025. Developers must responsibly adopt solutions that will minimise environmental damage.

Thankfully, they can choose from several effective sustainable design and construction practices. Existing technologies like smart building automation systems and IoT sensors are becoming more prevalent in construction with their ability to optimise energy use and improve overall sustainability. Similarly, prefabricated and modular construction techniques are also growing in popularity as they effectively reduce waste, and renewable energy technologies like solar panels and wind turbines are being integrated to mitigate climate change.

On the other hand, innovation in construction is also abundant with new materials and technologies being developed all the time. For example, materials such as bamboo can be used as a sustainable and renewable resource in construction, largely due to its high compressive strength and low weight. Technologies such as 3D printing can also be used to create custom, energy-efficient building components.

**Tell us about your latest development – ZāZEN Gardens.**

ZāZEN Gardens in Al Furjan will be the first LEED Gold certified and ‘wellbeing integrated’ development in the area, which is built with the highest standards and with no compromise to services or amenities for owners.

Upon completion, the development will contribute to a reduction of more than 24 per cent in annual electrical costs, while the use of efficient water fixtures will reduce annual water use by more than 33 per cent.

In total, the development will reduce nearly 470 metric tonnes of CO2 emissions annually. To top it off, our solar panels are estimated to produce approximately 40 per cent of the annual common area energy requirement for the project, which will be passed onto owners in the form of lower service charges.

With this type of approach, developers will be able to provide financially viable projects that are sustainable and add value to how people live and the environment simultaneously. ■