

Proposed Title: How the adoption of a green building certification program or rating system can improve the efficacy of the T&T planning system

Sub-theme:

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ABSTRACT

The World Cities Report 2016 indicates without a doubt that the current global model of urbanisation is unsustainable on numerous accounts. With many of the world's emerging economies located in the developing world, it calls for innovative and more integrated approaches to planning on the part of technocrats and decision-makers alike to position our cities as enabling hubs of transformative and sustainable development. The highly ambitious Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have set out a universal course of action for the next 15 years with the aim "to shift the world on to a sustainable and resilient path" and so achieve balance between the three dimensions: economy, social, and environment. Planning plays a critical role in attaining sustainable urban development through integrated and multi-sectoral approaches which incorporate local priorities while maintaining relevance in the global context. Flexibility and responsiveness must be foremost in the planning process as we combat the issues and challenges of urban areas which persist today.

Green (Building) Rating Systems such as BREEAM, LEED, and Green Star have risen in popularity and application over the last 20 years primarily in response to challenges faced by the construction sector to reduce the direct and indirect impacts of buildings on the environment. Since the introduction of BREEAM in the UK in the 1990s, the applicability of such a rating system has expanded beyond the scope of 'brick and mortar' to encompass the life-cycle of the building as it interacts with the environment and people. So much so, that today it is commonplace to have these programs built into the development approvals process. This paper explores how the adoption of a green building rating program could improve the efficacy of the planning system in Trinidad and Tobago.