

Backgrounder - Holcim Foundation for Sustainable Construction

Mission

Founded by Holcim in 2003, the Holcim Foundation for Sustainable Construction is an independent non-profit organization dedicated to accelerating the global movement for sustainable design and construction.

Its mission is to support the architecture, design, engineering, and urban planning innovators who want to change how the world builds. It does this through activities that enable the transfer of ideas and best practices across regions and generations. These include the Holcim Awards, the world's most significant competition for sustainable design, awarded bi-annually, and an international program of conferences designed to spark, interrogate and promote leading-edge thinking for sustainable construction.

Vision

The built environment shapes all our lives. It is also largely responsible for human-made alterations to our planet's ecosystems. So, to allow all life on earth to be sustained, we must urgently transform how we build.

At the Holcim Foundation, we believe the construction sector has the power and responsibility to build a better world. However, transforming the construction sector is a huge task. We are convinced that a number of interdependent goals and guiding principles for sustainable construction must be understood, mainstreamed, and implemented to succeed in building a better world. Our ambition is to help drive this system change by putting the requisite knowledge in the hands of everyone, for a future built environment in which both people and planet can thrive.

Goals and Principles for Sustainable Construction

To sustain our human-made habitat for current and future generations, all building and infrastructure projects must address four goals in the design and implementation phases. These goals are interdependent and must be pursued with equal conviction:

- **Uplifting places.** Beautiful and spatially relevant structures that work in unison with the local context and culture.
- **Healthy planet.** Structures that minimize resource use, avoid emissions, and embed solutions to repair ecosystems and restore biodiversity.

- **Viable economics.** Financial planning that combines short term project feasibility with long term circular value creation.
- **Thriving communities.** Inclusive and affordable living environments that cultivate equity, health and well-being.

These four goals alone are not enough to drive industry transformation. That's why we are committed to upholding three guiding principles that cut across the goals and are each critical to achieving our vision for a sustainable built environment. Sustainable construction is:

- **Holistic:** We believe in a systems approach which recognizes the interdependence of place, people, planet and economic goals, and considers these all equally.
- **Transformational:** We believe in the pursuit of the most breakthrough ideas and solutions to accelerate the sustainable transformation of the construction industry at speed and scale.
- **Transferable:** We believe that thought leadership and cutting-edge solutions must be put in the hands of the entire construction sector to drive real world impact.

Impact

The Foundation's expert community numbers close to 500 people from across research and practice in all regions of the world. Through collaboration with these experts and its network of partner universities, the Foundation has published close to 300 papers and provided in-person educational and networking opportunities to over 10,000 students and professionals since its creation.

With close to 30,000 entries received from 130 countries over the past two decades, the reach and impact of the Holcim Awards is significant: +250 projects have been recognised across five regions and three winning project authors have become Pritzker Prize Laureates.

Governance

The Holcim Foundation is a non-profit organization registered and based in Zurich, Switzerland.

The Foundation is governed by an independent and international Board of directors which makes decisions regarding the Foundation's strategic direction and respective programs. The Board is currently chaired by Maria Atkinson AM* (Australia), Sustainability Business Advisor and Founding CEO Green Building Council of Australia.

The Holcim Foundation Office is responsible for the daily management of the Foundation's activities and programs. Since 2022, the Foundation is led by Laura Viscovich (UK, France), Executive Director.

*Member of the Order of Australia