

Green tools for hotels, resorts

Property

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KUALALUMPUR: The Green Building Index (GBI) and Malaysian Association of Hotels (MAH) have launched tools for hotels and resorts in Malaysia for a greener infrastructure in conjunction with Visit Malaysia 2014.

The tools comprise the non-residential new construction (NRNC) hotel tool, non-residential existing building (NREB) hotel tool, NRNC resort tool and NREB resort tool.

At the launch of the tools yesterday, Arkitek MAA Sdn Bhd director and member of the GBI accreditation panel, Von Kok Leong, said the tools will enable hotels in the city centre to be energy efficient, while resorts will be able to improve ventilation to reduce air conditioning.

"About 60% of the energy used [in a building such as hotels and resorts is for] air conditioners," he said. "But unlike ... buildings in ... city centres, resorts [in Malaysia] which are commonly found on ... coastlines can improve their ventilation by reducing heat penetration [and therefore the use] of air-conditioners," said Leong.

The hotel and resort edition of the GBI tools will give practical guidelines to help hotel staff to better understand the strategies, investments and benefits involved in greening their properties.

Among the tools are energy and water efficiency, waste reduction and sustainable procurement, and healthy indoor environment by improving air quality and access to daylight.

The tools for hotels and resorts show that hospitality venues have potential for greening opportunities and reducing carbon footprints.

Based on 210 projects certified by GBI, the total carbon emission reduction to date is 430,000 tonnes a year.

Leong said the reduction of carbon emissions exceeded the previous estimation. He expects about 40% carbon emission reduction by 2020 as more buildings embrace the green building concept.

On whether the new tools will be compulsory for buildings to adopt in future, Leong felt people will have greater motivation to go green when they do it voluntarily.

"[Currently, hotels and resorts opt] to have green building certification. However, whether [such certification] will be a required policy in future [is unknown]."

To further support greener living, GBI will launch two new tools this year that are currently being developed. These are the public health and office interior tools.