



JST's Factory-on-the-Earth in Johor was designed by Ryuichi Ashizawa

Different kinds of green

THERE are certified "green" factories and there are factories that carry out environment-friendly practices. The former isn't necessarily greener than the latter just because it has official green certification.

More factories now incorporate some form of "greening", mainly due to cost-saving advantages. They are showing that going green is about more than saving the environment.

And it doesn't stop there. More Malaysian companies are mulling the next step, like Nippon Paint Malaysia – already known for its green practices.

The company is in active discussion with the Malaysia Green Building Council (MGBC) as well as the Green Building Index Accreditation Panel (GBIAP) for a preliminary assessment of its manufacturing facility in Shah Alam towards Green Factory

certification, says managing director Yaw Seng Heng.

"Through some of our green, sustainable practices, Nippon Paint was able to enjoy cost savings in the immediate as well as the longer term," he tells **FocusM**.

Some of these cost savings have included a reduction in overall electricity consumption and decreased water consumption.

It was a matter of a more efficient use of power and water. "Lowering electricity waste by either switching off the air-conditioning or setting the air-conditioning temperature at 24 degrees C; the installation of transparent roofing material to use natural sunlight; as well as the installation of wall panels to reduce the use of high bay lights [are some ways to lower electricity use]," says Yaw.



“Given the rise of the green agenda locally and globally, there is an urgent need for us to proactively change the way we conduct our business and adopt more environment-friendly measures.”

– Yaw

The company also recycles water for tank-cleaning, limits the use of water for cleaning as well as routinely repairs leaks.

Other green practices include recycling paper and plastics totalling up to 1,865kg per month and reducing spills during chemical handling, he adds.

There are also factories like JST Malaysia's plant in Johor, which gives the appearance it is a "green" factory.

The Malaysian plant of JST Manufacturing Co Ltd, one of the top 10 connector manufacturers in the world, has features designed by Japanese architect Ryuichi Ashizawa.

The entire factory complements nature, capturing sunlight, wind, rainwater and geothermal energy as an integral part of its design. In short, it is very green indeed.

The complex completely transcends the usual factory typology, with a natural grass roof covering the ground floor. The roof soil protects the factory from the sun and prevents it from becoming uncomfortably hot.

"Underneath, a forest of hexagon-topped pillars supports the roof. Within these arabesques, pipes funnel water from the roof into an underground storage tank – water used regularly to water plants. The motion of the water also pulls in air from outside, which naturally cools and ventilates the spaces below," says a report on the green factory.

"It doesn't take much to see there are great cost savings as a result of the design," says a source familiar with green certification in Malaysia.

"But a factory doesn't have to look green to be environment friendly. Nippon Paint Malaysia's factory doesn't look green from the outside but it has green practices. So do many Malaysian factories," he says.

"They don't have to be green-certified to be green.

"That's also one of the reasons we don't know exactly how many green factories there are in Malaysia. They may not have all the criteria or meet all the conditions for certification; but they can be really environment friendly," the source says.

"And there are many aspects to being green-certified that may not be applicable to certain companies, thereby disqualifying them," the source adds. He says this issue generates much debate among bodies involved in green certification.

But it is known that several companies are working towards green certification. "Given the rise of the green agenda locally and globally, there is an urgent need for us to proactively change the way we conduct our business and adopt more environment-friendly measures," says Nippon Paint's Yaw.