

IFC EDGE's Women in Green Building Competition winners take centre stage at Green Building Convention

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA, November 7, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- - This is the third year of the competition, which has grown to 45 competition entries in 2024 and seeks to inspire and empower women towards leadership roles in sustainable construction.

- This year's 3 winners received special recognition during the Green Building Convention, held in Cape Town, South Africa.

- More than 45% of South Africa's 127 [EDGE Experts](#) are women.

The International Finance Corporation (IFC), the private sector arm of the World Bank Group, announced three winners of its Women in Green Building Competition today, at the GBCSA's Green Building Convention 2024 held in Cape Town, South Africa.

This is the third year of the Women in Green Buildings Competition, run by IFC in partnership with the Green Building Council of South Africa (GBCSA), recognising women for their contributions to sustainable construction and their roles as [EDGE Experts](#), and designed to inspire more women into leadership positions in a sector that is still largely dominated by men.

As part of the process, many female professionals from South Africa's construction sector, including architects, engineers, and quantity surveyors, are offered the opportunity to increase their green building design skills. 45 women entered the competition this year. 28 women received Design for Greater Efficiency training and the 10 finalists received EDGE Expert training. Three of those 10 finalists received their winning awards at the GBCSA Convention in Cape Town



Rolf Frei, Consul General, Switzerland Government in Cape Town; Sibusiso Ndlovu, 1st place Winner; Lenore Cairncross, Africa Lead,EDGE and DfGE Programs, IFC; Avuyile Kewana, 3rd place Winner; Kushinga Kambarami, South Africa Lead,EDGE and DfGE. By Matthew Griffiths

this week.

Lenore Cairncross, IFC EDGE's Green Building Lead for Africa, commented: "I am delighted to be honouring the winners of our third annual Women in Green Building Competition today, as part of our ongoing commitment to foster an environment of equality and progress in the green construction and property industry. I believe that we need the vision, perspective, and outlook that women bring to help tackle the climate change challenge and to transform carbon intensive construction practices. IFC EDGE is committed to decarbonising the African built environment and supporting women in the sector through targeted training programmes, including this competition, which has grown year on year. There are many opportunities for growth and personal achievement in the green building sector, but we also need visionary executives to provide women with opportunities to grow and advance their professional careers."

South Africa leads Africa in the effort to reduce building emissions and energy use and integrate women into the green buildings sector, boasting the most EDGE certified floorspace on the continent at 5.3 million sqm (the equivalent of about 620 football fields). There are 619 EDGE Experts across Africa, about a quarter of them women, but in South Africa, more than 45 percent of the country's 127 EDGE Experts are women.

Introducing this year's competition winners



Lenore Cairncross, Africa Lead for the EDGE and DfGE Programs, IFC. By Matthew Griffiths



Lenore Cairncross, Africa Lead, EDGE and DfGE, IFC; Maygan Naicker, PM at Nedbank; Portia Letlape, Head of Product at Absa Home Loans; Aisha Shaik, Sustainability Consultant, Skyline Consulting; Lizeri Serfontein, PM, Rabie Properties. By Matthew Griffiths

Sibusiso Ndlovu won first place in the competition. She is a qualified Chartered Accountant and a Certified Director with the Institute of Directors in South Africa with a passion for property and green building finance, and extensive experience across the banking, property and fund management industries as a fund manager, deal maker and structured property finance consultant. She is currently a Business Development Manager at Fortress Real Estate Investments, responsible for structuring and deal making as part of the Corporate Finance team.

Theuna Stoltz, a dynamic female architect who graduated with a master's degree from UFS in 2016, won the second award. She has worked on a wide range of projects, including residential, commercial, mixed-use, and urban regeneration, and is currently an Associate and professional architect at GASS Architecture Studios, where she oversees projects from concept design to completion. Among her notable projects is the regenerative campus, Green School South Africa, which, once EDGE certified, will be the first building in Africa to be Living Building Compliant. As part of her ongoing commitment to environmentally conscious design, Theuna says that she is striving to create spaces that not only minimize their ecological footprint but also foster a connection to nature. Theuna believes designers play a vital role in creating spaces that influence the everyday life of users and their surroundings, emphasizing sustainability and resilience.

Avuyile Kewana won the third award. She is a climate change, sustainability and built environment professional with over 5 years' experience in diverse sectors such as climate change mitigation and adaptation, energy and resource efficiency in buildings. Currently an Assistant Professional Officer: Energy in buildings for the City of Cape Town, she is working towards addressing climate change through net zero carbon strategies in municipal, existing and new builds in Cape Town by driving regulatory change, education and other mechanisms to achieve a city-wide zero carbon objective for the built environment. Avuyile says that she is deeply passionate about urban sustainability and drawn to the idea of effectively reducing the impact of negative climate change impacts on the environment and promoting sustainable development by mainstreaming the environment through sustainable economic development plans and policies. She strongly believes in the role of government, private organisations and communities to drive and harness a sustainable future for all.

Ahead of the award ceremony, Lisa Reynolds, CEO of GBCSA gave a keynote address, focusing on the importance of women's leadership in achieving net zero and the current landscape of green building in Africa, and introduced the panel discussion 'Women leading the charge to net Zero', which was hosted and moderated by Lenore Cairncross, IFC EDGE Africa's Green Building Lead. The panel discussed challenges and opportunities in achieving net zero, financing and risk management for green projects, gender-specific challenges and support systems, and personal experiences and advice for aspiring women, featuring guests Portia Letlape, Head of Product: Home Loans, Absa, Lizeri Serfontein, Project Manager, Rabie Properties, Maygan Naicker, Head of Projects & EDGE Expert, Nedbank, and Aisha Shaikh, Owner & Principal Sustainability Consultant, Skyline Projects & Consulting.

Lisa Reynolds, CEO of GBCSA, commented: "I believe that the sustainability space is an ideal one in which women can strive, thrive, and succeed. The Women in Green Building competition is a perfect springboard into this space. GBCSA is proud to be partnering with IFC EDGE in this competition for the third year, and even prouder to host the awards ceremony at our annual Convention, and to celebrate the launch of the winners. This is just the beginning. Next, is to expose the winners to new career and job expansion opportunities, and to support them in their future careers in green building."

The IFC EDGE (Excellence in Design for Greater Efficiencies) platform is an international green building certification that considers improved savings in energy, water, and embodied carbon within the building materials to facilitate the design of more resource efficient projects, helping property developers to build and brand green in a fast, easy, and affordable way. It currently dominates the residential green building certification market with more than 90% of residential certifications in South Africa (Estate Intel Africa's Green Building – 2022 Fact Sheet).

EDGE Experts are industry professionals trained to help developers, owners or larger project teams understand the EDGE standard, software and certification system, including advice on green design and assistance with preparation of an application for EDGE certification. For further information about the Women in Green Building Competition 2025, or IFC EDGE professional training programs, please visit <https://edgebuildings.com/marketplace/edge-experts/>

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