

EmiratesGBC 2024 Congress Briefing

Beyond COP28: The Role of the Built Environment to Deliver on the UAE Consensus.

Under the Patronage of the Ministry of Energy & Infrastructure.

Panel 3.1: The Supply Chain through the Lens of Circularity

“The Supply Chain Through the Lens of Circularity” panel examined how data monitoring, collection, analysis, and accessibility drive sustainability efforts and inform decision-making in the built environment. It also emphasised the value of benchmarking to help organisations assess their performance, set achievable goals, and develop data-driven strategies for sustainable growth.

Speakers

Abdallah Massaad, CEO, RAK Ceramics

Anjali Lukose, Head of ESG, ALEC

Khaled El Dokani, CEO, Lafarge UAE, Oman & Qatar

Lindsey Malcolm, Sustainability Lead, Middle East, Turner & Townsend

Viacheslav Zavgorodniy, Associate Director, Consulting, Tenet, as moderator

The conversation highlighted the increasing importance of circularity, particularly considering COP28’s commitments and the UAE’s local initiatives like the Cement Breakthrough and Waste to Zero. These frameworks underscore the urgency to reduce CO₂ emissions across construction materials, which account for a significant share of global energy-related emissions.

Lafarge discussed the cement industry’s journey to reduce emissions, describing initiatives to substitute traditional fuels and develop carbon capture technologies. **Lafarge** also shared their goal to lower CO₂ emissions per ton of cement to 450 kg by 2027, and the potential for alternative fuels and waste heat recovery to drive further reductions.

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RAK Ceramics highlighted efforts in resource efficiency and recycling, including achieving 100% water recycling and a high rate of material reuse within their manufacturing processes, noting the critical role of local sourcing and advanced energy management systems in minimizing environmental impact.

Moving on, **Turner & Townsend** reflected on the growing demand for sustainable practices post-COP28, describing how clients are increasingly prioritizing lifecycle impacts, with 75% raising sustainability on their agendas. This shift emphasizes the importance of data-driven insights and lifecycle analysis in guiding sustainable development.

ALEC provided the contractor's perspective, highlighting that sustainable materials are often omitted from project specifications by consultants and clients due to budget constraints and lack of local availability. **ALEC** is preparing for the future demand by investing in modular construction to reduce waste and enhance material efficiency, adopting circular practices such as on-site concrete recycling and reuse where feasible, engaging with suppliers on potential take back programmes and working with the supply chain to collect Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs) for major construction materials.

In conclusion, the panel underscored the need for collaboration, regulatory support, and innovation to achieve the industry's sustainability goals. By embedding circularity into every stage of the supply chain, the built environment can move closer to achieving net-zero targets and contribute to global emissions reductions.