

Wild Coast Sun achieves first-in-Africa Net Zero Waste certification

Sun International's Wild Coast Sun has achieved Africa's first Net Zero Waste rating from the Green Building Council of South Africa (GBCSA).



"We are delighted that the growth and innovation coming out of the property sector through initiatives like the Wild Coast Sun Net Zero Waste certification proves to the rest of the world that we can indeed put sustainability and environmental issues at the heart of how we design, build, and operate better, greener buildings and precincts - congratulations to Sun International for demonstrating great environmental leadership," said Manfred Braune, GBCSA managing executive: sector development and transformation, following the announcement.

As part of their sustainability journey, Sun International has embarked on an aggressive Zero-Waste-to-Landfill initiative to be achieved by the end of 2020 at all its South African units. Wild Coast Sun is the first unit within the group to achieve this target. Jennifer van Niekerk of GCX, the accredited professional who conducted the Net Zero Certification explained, "The Wild Coast Sun's waste management strategy includes the composting of organic waste onsite, recycling of recyclables by means of approved recyclers, donation and resale of reusable items and the manufacturing of bricks from non-valuable non-recyclable waste."

Brick manufacturing and recycling is conducted offsite with the assistance of a waste contractor, however extensive measures have been put in place to reduce, reuse, separate and treat 70% of the waste produced on site.

"Our zero waste to landfill project is just one of many initiatives we are implementing. The triple benefit of reducing and converting waste into a useful resource is that we achieve our commitment to be environmentally responsible, we support the local economy through job creation, and we minimise the impact on our bottom line. I call that a win-win-win situation," added head of sustainability at Sun International Jannette Horn.



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Emphasis on separation of organic waste

As an integral step in the success of their zero waste to landfill solution, the Wild Coast Sun has placed significant emphasis on the separation of organic waste at source in all its own kitchens. It has supported, trained and helped develop a full-time enterprise to remove organic waste from the kitchens and sort the waste to remove all contaminants by hand. Another enterprise, also trained and assisted by the Wild Coast Sun, then composts the organic waste and uses it in an onsite vegetable garden, the produce from which is sold back to the hotel for use in the kitchens. An additional requirement of the certification, the Wild Coast Sun were required to meet the following criteria: implement onsite waste recycling, conduct regular waste stream audits of ongoing consumables and have an updated operational waste and materials management plan.

"Waste should no longer be seen as something to be disposed and as a cost - it should be seen as a resource. Landfill sites are filling up, and we must prepare for a complete shift in thinking around waste. It is a no-brainer that green building, including waste minimisation and reuse, is no longer a lofty ideal on the continent and the rest of the world, we can now see the tangible benefits that are tied to sustainability from an African context and the fact that within a few years the South African industry anticipates that we will have a much higher level of green building activity is pleasing," said Braune.

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