

The Middle East's First Low-Energy School Boasts Breakthrough Innovation Under the MINERGIE Label

- *Middle East's first low-energy school consuming 1/3rd of the energy of standard buildings*
- *Building is MINERGIE certified; a Swiss low-energy consumption label*
- *Cost reductions translated into savings that will fund academic scholarships*
- *Supporting the green ambitions of the UAE Vision 2021 National Agenda and supporting the sustainable development in the lead up to Expo 2020 Dubai*

13 September 2015, Dubai UAE – The Swiss International Scientific School in Dubai (SISD), which opened for this academic year, is the Middle East's first low-energy building in the education space, consuming one third of the energy of standard buildings across the region. The school, which received the region's first MINERGIE Certificate, is a breakthrough in the creation of sustainable standards. Swiss MINERGIE label, which awards low-energy buildings, is thought to substantially improve the comfort and productivity of occupants at commercially viable costs compared to traditional construction techniques. The school has announced the energy cost reduction will be translated into savings that will fund academic scholarships on offer to students within the second year of operation.

SISD Founder Mr. Omar Danial said that for SISD, sustainability was not just about minimising the environmental footprint, but about fostering a healthy, comfortable learning environment for the children: *"it's not just a label, it is embedded in the walls of the school and in our philosophy. The building is designed as a high-grade envelope with the best air tightness and the highest insulation standards, to reduce air loss as well as heat transfer, known as thermal bridge. At the same time, the light transmission is optimized to reduce electricity consumption. The building's energy consumption will be certified at 34.9 Kwh/m²/year, while a regular building will consume much more than 100 Kwh/m²/year. All this was achieved while preserving commercial viable technologies at an affordable construction cost and time in DHCC, a health care zone which values health standards of the highest quality."*

The combination of a sustainable architectural design with smart energy monitoring and management is also expected to provide an unprecedented opportunity for students, parents and staff to learn and experience a more responsible use of natural resources – an ambition well suited to schools around the world, and undoubtedly a statement set to become a benchmark of sustainability and innovation for the Middle East.

Archilab, the consultants combining MINERGIE concepts in the design of the building, identified the main challenge of the project as the integration of a new high-specification contemporary campus with the school's strong Swiss identity and heritage. They performed an analysis of the common elements linking both cultures, starting from the extreme climate conditions such as very high temperatures in the UAE summer, and very low temperatures in the Swiss winter. Despite being two such different cultures, they found that over the centuries, very similar design and construction solutions had been found.

SORANE are the engineering consultancy behind SISD's MINERGIE project, and together with DSA Architects International, WME Consultants, Al Ahmadiyah Contracting & Trading, they have overseen the design and construction of the first MINERGIE standard building in the MENA region. The project

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boasted novel developments in both the design and build delivery of a low energy consumption built environment, which have not yet been seen outside of Switzerland.

MINERGIE was first introduced in 1995, and today 30% of all new buildings in Switzerland are certified according to their standards. SISD's strong partnership with MINERGIE and EPFL (École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne) Middle East, a pioneering energy and sustainability research center based in Ras Al Khaimah, has seen numerous master-level projects roll out since 2011. Vice-president of MINERGIE-association, Dr. Ruedi Kriesi said that in cooperation with Dr. Franco Vigliotti at EPFL-Middle East, he applied his knowledge of energy-efficiency for cold climates to the hot and humid climate of the Arab Emirates:

SISD is located on Dubai Creek in Dubai Healthcare City (DHCC), the world's largest healthcare free zone. It is anticipated that SISD will seek to strengthen DHCC's position as a regional hub for healthcare with education at its core. Her Excellency Dr Raja Al Gurg, Vice-Chairperson and Executive Director of Dubai Healthcare City Authority, said that achievement of the green building certification by the Swiss International Scientific School in Dubai, one of Dubai Healthcare City's new business partners to operate in its Phase 2 wellness expansion, is an achievement on several levels:

"The Green building certification reinforces the UAE Government's efforts to preserve the environment while balancing economic and social development. It implements the green growth plans outlined in the UAE Vision 2021 National Agenda and adds momentum to the UAE's plans towards sustainable development in the lead up to Expo 2020 Dubai. Swiss International Scientific School strengthens DHCC's Phase 2 and our plans to ensure environmental prudence and social responsibility as well as to promote education."

- Ends -

Notes to editors:

The First Phase was ready to welcome students from Pre-KG to Grade 6 for the 2015-16 academic year, with additional sports facilities opening in September 2016. The full campus including the Boarding Houses, Auditorium and Secondary School will be ready for the academic year 2018-19. For more information on Swiss International Scientific School in Dubai, visit www.sisd.ae

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About SISD

The Swiss International Scientific School in Dubai (SISD), based in Dubai Healthcare City (DHCC), is a leading international boarding school where future generations are inspired to become confident and enthusiastic life-long learners, ready to embrace the opportunities and challenges in a global world. SISD provides an inspiring and challenging learning environment whilst celebrating academic excellence. Students are encouraged to become successful, global minded, enthusiastic life-long learners who will confidently take advantage of future opportunities and help to make a difference. Together with the teaching staff and parents, students are supported to fully develop their potential in a motivating multi-lingual, international learning environment.

Students of SISD enjoy a multi-lingual education through the Swiss-founded International Baccalaureate (IB) continuum programme. Students learn in three bilingual sections with English-French, and English-German or English with foreign languages on offer. In Grade 9, students will have the option to move into the Swiss Matura set and graduate with a bilingual Matura.