

Early days for stainless steel in cladding, construction industry

SIMONE LIEDTKE | CREAMER MEDIA ONLINE WRITER

INTO FOCUS

Stainless steel in cladding construction brings the advantages into focus

The South African stainless steel industry is in an early developmental stage with regards to construction and cladding, despite many architectural projects having been completed over the past few decades, says South African Stainless Steel Development Association (Sassda) Western Cape regional manager **Michel Basson**.

This early stage, he adds, provides an opportunity for the local stainless steel industry to grow rapidly over the next decade, considering that stainless steel – while slightly more expensive – has the unique ability to resist corrosion, heat and chemical damage, thereby providing a total life-cycle costing that is, in most cases, “unbeatable”.

Basson explains that albeit that most

stainless steel grades can be used for architectural application, high-strength duplex grades of stainless steel provide added strength, which allows for a reduced thickness of the material, subsequently providing a cost advantage over conventional grades of steel since the construction will be lighter with an extremely long service life.

“... the more alloyed the material, the higher the cost. With stainless steel, a balance can be achieved between cost-effectiveness and functional ability. It is the role of Sassda to assist in this balancing act to provide a sufficient life span at optimum cost.”

Basson also highlights the “definitive advantages” when façades, which are constructed using cladding, act as a sunscreen

by decreasing building temperatures. When installed correctly, this reduces electricity use and adds to the green status of buildings.

“Stainless steel contributes greatly to building safety in terms of high-temperature strength and seismic stability. The life-cycle cost remains a winner and stainless steel is stronger, meaning that thinner and lighter gauges can be used.”

For this reason, Sassda launched its Lifecycle Costing app, in 2016, which calculates the long-term cost benefits of stainless steel and allows for accurate material cost comparisons over the entire life cycle of a project.

Using stainless steel in cladding

• To page 28