

EDGE: Bringing sustainability to Kenya's hospitality sector

Executive Residency by Best Western is an award-winning four-star apartment hotel which gained EDGE certification in 2019. It was the first hotel in Kenya to achieve this and received an award as 'Energy Project of the Year' from the Association of Energy Engineers for the Sub-Saharan Africa Region in the same year. The complex is situated in a prime location, along Riverside Drive in Westlands, a mixed-use commercial and residential neighborhood, located 3.2km from Nairobi's CBD, one of Nairobi's most centrally located suburbs. It comprises 48 serviced apartments including a fully equipped kitchen, dining room, living space, high-speed internet and daily housekeeping services. Impressively, the building's reduction in water and energy use saves an estimated \$50,000 - \$60,000 USD each year.

Retrospective certification

Interestingly, Executive's EDGE certification was achieved retrospectively on an existing building which was built in 2014. The EDGE standard is the same for all buildings irrespective of whether they already exist or are newly constructed. The only difference for a retrospectively certified building is that materials in structures older than five years are considered embodied energy neutral, to be indicated as 'reuse of existing materials' within the EDGE app. Several other EDGE buildings within Kenya were retrospectively certified. These include projects such as Absa Bank's buildings and Caxton House, a three-story office building in Nairobi's business district.

EDGE: Making buildings more marketable

Executive Residency uses resource-efficient design features and technologies to reduce its environmental impact and save on operating costs. Natural ventilation in the corridors and guestrooms, as well as a reduced window-to-wall ratio, have eliminated the need for heating or air conditioning, while a heat pump for hot water has been installed as well as solar hot water collectors, solar photovoltaics and energy-saving lighting. This raft of measures has managed to achieve a total of 35% energy savings. As a result, the hotel's management believes it now has a more marketable proposition to guests who are of an eco-friendly mindset.

To save a total of around a third of water, dual-flush water closets in guest rooms and all other bathrooms, along with low-flow showerheads and faucets, auto-shutoff faucets in all other bathrooms and water-efficient kitchen faucets were installed.

Revealing why the company chose to pursue EDGE certification, Abraham Munene, Director of the complex said: "In recent years, there has been growing support for stakeholder capitalism and the long-term impact of companies on society and the environment. We chose EDGE because we are conscious of the environment in which we build our developments and because we care about our guests' impact on that same environment. By pursuing EDGE, we offer low carbon accommodation for our long and short-term stays at the same high value."