

Grontmij and Soeters Van Eldonk win international design competition in China for the most sustainable office building in the world

Grontmij, in collaboration with Soeters Van Eldonk architects, has won an international design competition to become lead designer for the Wuhan New Energy Centre. The centre is a research institute in the field of new energy sources and sustainability in Wuhan, China. On completion, the innovative building, Wuhan Energy Flower, will be guaranteed the most senior Three-star Award in the China Green Building Evaluation System and will also be the first office building in the world to meet receive the BREEAM 'Outstanding' accreditation in the BRE's International classification. Construction of the building will start in November 2010. The building is designed on behalf of the client, Hubei Science & Technology Investment Company.

Most sustainable building of the world

Grontmij, in collaboration with Soeters Van Eldonk architects, designed the building in the shape of a flower, taking the Calla Lily as inspiration. The building will have zero carbon emissions and has zero-energy ambitions. The office building will be approximately 140m tall, surrounded by laboratories in the form of leaves. The building is designed so that it will be in its own shade in the hot Chinese summer. The roof of the flower consists mainly of solar panels for generating energy. Rainwater is collected in the bowl and used as water supply in the building. The characteristic pistil consists of vertical wind turbines to generate wind energy. The edge of the bowl forms a sunroof designed for heating and cooling of the building. The building is the principle of natural ventilation. The central solar chimney of more than 120m in height is designed for natural air ventilation into the offices.

Wuhan, the most sustainable city of China

The building will become a major centre for research and development into new energy technologies as the public research platform of Wuhan University. It combines the outstanding concept of new energy application, advanced technology, with energy-saving, low-carbon, comfortable, intelligent, efficient, and unique artistic design. In the coming years, the city of Wuhan (with over nine million inhabitants) will become the most sustainable city development in China. In this context, an international competition for the construction of the Wuhan New Energy Centre was a natural decision.

Gert Dral, Grontmij Group Director of Planning & Design commented: ‘the Wuhan Energy Flower is a beautiful and inspirational design and one which signifies the zero carbon and zero-energy ambitions of the building. Grontmij’s involvement in such a prestigious building in China is something to be proud of as we see the sustainable city of Wuhan develop further.’

Jos van Eldonk, architect for the project said: ‘We took our inspiration from nature itself for this innovative building design. The collective influence of sun, wind and water are integrated into the design of the flower-shaped building. Technical skill and creative imagination are perfectly combined in a sustainable way’.

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