**PRESS RELEASE**

Sustainable Legacies allows AECOM to deliver a better world

**World Engineering Day on 4 March highlights the importance of Sustainable Development**

**3 March 2022:** Premier infrastructure delivery company [AECOM](http://www.aecom.com) has sustainability at the heart of its business with its Sustainable Legacies strategy for reaching ambitious environmental, social and governance (ESG) objectives. The strategy integrates four key pillars to embed sustainable development and resilience across the company’s work, improve social outcomes for communities, achieve net-zero carbon emissions and enhance governance.

This is in celebration of [World Engineering Day (WED) for Sustainable Development](https://worldengineeringday.net/) on 4 March. Proclaimed by UNESCO at its 40th General Conference in 2019, it was based on a proposal from the World Federation of Engineering Organisations (WFEO). It has been celebrated worldwide on 4 March each year since 2020 as a UNESCO International Day. The day offers an opportunity to highlight the achievements of engineers and engineering in our modern world and improve public understanding of how engineering and technology is central to modern life and for sustainable development.

AECOM was ranked #3 in Engineering News Record’s (ENR’s) 2021 Top 200 Environmental Firms, the seventh year in a row it has placed in the top three of the global rankings. Its environmental team in Africa consists of a group of dedicated environmental scientists, social scientists and climate-change advisors. It provides services to both internal and external clients, addressing the need for environmental and social impact assessments (ESIAs) to meet international funder requirements; waste, water, and air emissions licences; compliance monitoring and auditing; sustainability and climate change assessments; and stakeholder engagement, integrated environmental planning and environmental advisory services throughout South Africa, Africa and the Middle East.

**Kim Timm**, Technical Director for Structures at AECOM, explains that sustainability itself is a holistic approach within the Buildings + Places business line, covering everything from the materials used to a project’s integration with its environment. “Sustainability needs to be at the forefront of a consultant’s mind during the concept design process. Incorporating sensible green principles from the outset has long-term benefits for the lifespan of the structure, as well as the surrounding area.”

This can be seen in more and more buildings striving to achieve Green Star environmental certification from the Green Building Council of South Africa (GBCSA). “It is not merely a matter of pursuing such certification either, as sustainability must be part of the entire end-to-end process,” notes Timm. It ranges from the selection of admixtures for concrete to sourcing products locally to minimise the carbon footprint, for example.

Above and beyond specifying the actual products, there is also the wellbeing of the building that must be considered. Here sustainability encompasses the occupants themselves to counter ‘sick building syndrome’. “We now have a much better understanding of how to be able to design around that and ensure the health and safety of the people within the building are a priority. This looks at everything from air and water quality, right down to ensuring the correct amount of sunlight enters the building as people are happier and healthier in natural light conditions. The aim is to ensure it is not a purely artificial environment, which is an important aspect that can be catered for right from the concept design stage,” says Timm.

She adds that the design process is not solely about creating a structure but must also account for the long-term impact of any future demolition or refurbishment. “The fact that we are increasingly motivating for Green Star certification means we need to examine how a project fits into the overall environmental plan for that local area and region, so we have a ‘continuity of greenness’,” says Timm.

The sustainability of a building project also extends to the wider infrastructure that supports it, adds **James Anafi**, Associate Director for Rail in Africa. “Railway is resilient because it ticks a lot of boxes in terms of sustainable modes of transportation. In fact, no country can advance properly without developing its railway sector sustainably.”

Railway networks also have a long lifespan and require relatively low maintenance intervention once in place. In addition, the high capacity and low energy requirement means that large numbers of people and heavy loads can be conveyed for long distances efficiently, cost-effectively, and sustainably. Such railway networks also provide ample opportunity for nodal development along their entire lengths, effectively stitching a country together into a single socioeconomic framework.

“Our approach to sustainability resonates with our clients as they know we have a strong stance in this area. Our clients’ sustainability priorities are evolving, and by advancing ESG objectives and applying our technical excellence, we can work with them to achieve their own developmental goals. At AECOM, we strive to deliver a better world. Through global collaboration and local engagement, we can create long-lasting impacts on the communities we serve,” concludes Anafi.

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**Notes to the editor**

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**About AECOM**

AECOM is the world’s trusted infrastructure consulting firm, delivering professional services throughout the project lifecycle – from planning, design and engineering to program and construction management. On projects spanning transportation, buildings, water, new energy and the environment, our public- and private-sector clients trust us to solve their most complex challenges. Our teams are driven by a common purpose to deliver a better world through our unrivalled technical expertise and innovation, a culture of equity, diversity and inclusion, and a commitment to environmental, social and governance priorities. AECOM is a Fortune 500 firm and its Professional Services business had revenue of $13.3 billion in fiscal year 2021. See how we are delivering sustainable legacies for generations to come at aecom.com and @AECOM.

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