



When Antonio Lara Martin-Albo, CEO of eco-friendly architect/engineer SDEM TEGA, looks around the Middle East, he doesn't see what all the green fuss is about.

SDEM TEGA-part of the larger ST Group-was established in Madrid in 1995 and is in the process of developing technology that has the ability to garner 30MW of installed power through clean technology. That level of technology has the potential to save almost 12,000 tonnes of CO₂ per project, per year.

While that technology has yet to enter the Gulf market, what is available here isn't really being used. "Everyone says the UAE is 'green' but when I look around, I can't see many green installations," said Martin-Albo.

Seemingly a one-stop shop for green buildings, the ST Group strategy is to develop the "perfect combination" of R&D and benchmarking in the fields of electrical installations, communication networks and renewable energy. Its green building competency lies in protecting natural resources, reducing solid waste and CO₂, improving thermal, acoustic and lighting conditions and ensuring the best possible water and air quality for users.

ST Group's research focus is moving toward renewable technologies and, in particular, the way in which PV systems, wind energy, biogas, biomass, geothermal installations and fuel cells can provide power to places where it is either too costly to be viable or simply unavailable. According to ST Group's corporate mantra: "Renewable energy is the way to a better, environmentally friendly, future." Because of that commitment, the company continues to improve its products and services, while monitoring and observing any developments in environmental legislation.

While SDEM TEGA is working on projects throughout Europe, it has yet to break into the Gulf, save for one project: "We have a 2KW photovoltaic panel installation on the roof of the Spanish Ambassador's home in Abu Dhabi," said Martin-Albo. "We're hoping to use that as a platform to launch into the region."

Despite a large interest and three previous years of exhibiting at Big 5, development has been slow in the Gulf-a reality not helped by the global recession. "Right now, the market is complicated, the global crisis has made everything very difficult," explained Martin-Albo. "We are looking for owners and developers who understand green buildings and are open to making that initial investment. Not only that, we need to find people who really want green buildings. So far, I've not seen much of that in the Gulf."

Whether in Europe or the Middle East, the key to achieving large scale green goals, explained Martin-Albo, is getting involved in the design of buildings very early. "You've got to design green elements into your building before construction," he said. "If that is done, it is much easier-and much cheaper-to take a design and make it a green building."