

## **Award Selection**

The Flourishing Greenprint Award 2025

### **Nominator**

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### **Nominee**

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Other representative(s) from the same company or more than one company (if any)

All from Gensler - Chun En Ong, Design Manager. Michelle Tan, Interior Designer. Marcus Seet, Interior Designer. Tian Hong Wong, Interior Designer. Jing Yi Chen, Brand Designer. Angeline Lee, Brand Designer. Krithika Sivakumar, Project Architect.

## **1. Strategic Alignment**

How did the project align with the client's corporate strategy and values? (5 points, max 250 words)

DBS Office @ Hong Lim embodies DBS's corporate vision to be "The Best Bank for a Better World," a commitment to advancing sustainability and social responsibility across every aspect of its business. The project translates this vision into a tangible, daily experience for employees, where environmental stewardship and innovation are lived values.

As one of Asia's most forward-looking financial institutions, DBS has long championed responsible banking and net-zero ambitions. This workplace reinforces that strategy by using the built environment as a catalyst for behavioural change. Rather than opting for new construction, the design embraced a regenerative model: restoring, reclaiming, and reusing materials to extend their life cycles and minimise embodied carbon.

In collaboration with Gensler, the design process for DBS @ Hong Lim focused on creating a circular ecosystem within the office, where sustainability decisions became learning moments for employees. By integrating storytelling, visibility, and education directly into the design, DBS empowered its people to recognize how their workspace supports both environmental and social impact.

The result is a living demonstration of corporate purpose, a space that operates as a blueprint for DBS's sustainability journey, reinforcing its values of innovation, empathy, and responsibility while inspiring the industry to view sustainability as a shared corporate culture.

## **2. Project Objectives & Challenges**

What were the primary project objectives? What unique challenges related to Sustainability & Wellness did the project want to overcome? (15 points, 400 words)

DBS aimed to create a workplace that fully embodied its ESG commitments, a space that reduces environmental footprint, enhances employee well-being, and fosters cultural transformation. The primary sustainability objectives were:

- To maximize the reuse of existing materials and furniture, extending product lifecycles.
- To minimize embodied carbon and waste generation through circular design.

- To enhance occupant health and comfort using non-toxic, natural materials.
- To embed sustainability education into employees' daily experience.

The challenge was achieving ambitious reuse and retention targets: 94% of acoustic ceilings, gypsum, and lighting; 89% of partitions and glazing; and 77% of loose furniture, without compromising functionality, safety or aesthetics. Each reused element required detailed structural assessment, refurbishment, and adaptation to meet workplace standards.

Reclaimed materials also introduced complexity. Crafting 151 reclaimed solid wood tabletops demanded careful treatment to maintain durability and quality while using natural, non-toxic coatings. Installing glue-free carpet tiles and PET acoustic panels required new construction techniques and performance testing to match traditional systems.

Equally significant was the cultural challenge. Employees often associate "sustainability" with compromise, expecting newness and uniformity in modern offices. To address this, the project integrated change management from the outset, using co-creation workshops and storytelling to align the design intent with employee values. Ultimately, DBS and Gensler turned these challenges into opportunities for innovation, demonstrating that sustainability can elevate the workplace experience.

### 3. Metrics & Performance

What were the defined key metrics to measure project success? How were these metrics tracked and assessed throughout the project lifecycle? (10 points, max 250 words)

*Example metrics: Workplace environment, Productivity, Employee experience/engagement, Employee attraction/retention, Client experience, Cost baseline*

DBS established clear metrics to measure both environmental performance and human outcomes, aligning with corporate sustainability goals and ESG reporting standards.

- Reuse Rate: 94% of existing acoustic ceilings, gypsum, and lighting retained; 89% of partitions and glazing reused; 77% of loose furniture preserved.
- Material Circularity: 151 reclaimed wood tabletops, 147 refurbished task chairs, 30 reused metal cabinets, 926 m<sup>2</sup> of glue-free carpet tiles, and acoustic panels made from 100% post-consumer PET.
- Waste Diversion & Carbon Reduction: Significant reduction in embodied carbon achieved by avoiding new production and landfill waste, tracked using Gensler's carbon lifecycle assessment tools.

Tracking was enabled through close collaboration between DBS's Corporate Real Estate team and Gensler's sustainability analytics, ensuring full transparency and accountability. These metrics demonstrate that circular design can meet sustainability targets while also upholding workplace excellence. The project delivered high-performing, user-focused spaces while generating measurable environmental benefits. By embedding measurable outcomes into both design and operational strategies, DBS @ Hong Lim showcases that sustainability can coexist with superior functionality, employee satisfaction, and organizational impact, setting a benchmark for environmentally responsible and human-centered workplace design.

### 4. Innovation

Describe how innovative Sustainability & Wellness initiatives were incorporated into the project. How did these innovations set the project apart in the marketplace? (30 points, max 800 words)

*Examples: Reduce absolute emissions (Scope 1, 2 and 3, waste etc) during design, build and operations, Enhance the occupants health, safety and wellbeing*

DBS Office @ Hong Lim redefines what it means to design sustainably in the workplace, moving beyond "low-impact" design to achieve regenerative performance through circular thinking, human engagement, and measurable results.

#### 1. Circular Economy at Scale

The project achieved high material reuse rates in a workplace retrofit:

- 94% of existing ceilings, gypsum, and lighting retained
- 89% of partitions and glazing reused
- 77% of loose furniture preserved

- 147 task chairs and 30 metal cabinets restored
- 151 tabletops crafted from reclaimed wood
- 926 m<sup>2</sup> of carpet tiles installed using glue-free tack adhesive

This approach avoided tonnes of waste and significantly lowered embodied carbon emissions — proving that large-scale corporate fit-outs can operate as circular systems rather than linear consumption models.

## 2. Regenerative Material Strategies

Innovation extended beyond reuse into how materials were renewed. Reclaimed tabletops were assembled using water-based glue and traditional joinery for disassembly and reuse. Decorative wood panels were designed with 76% demountable backing for adaptability. Acoustic panels were manufactured from 100% post-consumer PET bottles, binder-free and chemical-free, demonstrating that sustainable materials can also achieve acoustic excellence and aesthetic warmth.

Even workstation tops found second life as utility cabinets, extending product value across generations of use. Every material was considered not as a disposable product but as part of a continuous lifecycle, embodying the regenerative principle of “restore over replace.”

## 3. Integrating Change Management and Design

A key innovation was the integration of behavioural change into design. Gensler and DBS co-developed an employee engagement program embedded directly into the workspace. Through material swatches, signage, and playful prompts inviting employees to “spot the reclaimed materials,” sustainability became interactive and visible.

This approach shifted sustainability from a back-end design concept to a participatory experience, fostering awareness, curiosity, and ownership among employees. The office itself became a communication tool, inspiring daily mindfulness of environmental impact.

## 4. Healthier Materials, Healthier People

All finishes were selected for low toxicity and improved indoor environmental quality. Reclaimed wood was treated with natural oils and water-based coatings. The extensive reuse of existing finishes reduced emissions associated with new product manufacturing and installation. Employees benefit from a workspace that feels natural and psychologically restorative.

## 5. Setting a Benchmark for Regenerative Design

What sets this project apart is its holistic integration of environmental sustainability, cultural transformation, and operational performance. Circular design wasn’t applied selectively, it informed every material and engagement strategy.

By uniting sustainability with workplace innovation, DBS Office @ Hong Lim demonstrates that regeneration can be a practical and human-led design strategy, one that accelerates industry adoption of environmentally and socially responsible practices across Asia.

## Stakeholder Engagement

How did you engage employees, stakeholders, or the community in the design and innovation process? (20 points, max 250 words)

Collaboration and co-creation were central to the project’s success. From the outset, DBS, Gensler, and partners adopted a whole-system design approach, engaging stakeholders across all levels, from corporate real estate and sustainability leaders to everyday users.

Workshops and design charrettes invited employees to share expectations for hybrid work and sustainability, directly shaping spatial strategies and material choices. This inclusive process ensured that the design reflected real employee needs and fostered early buy-in.

Gensler and DBS co-developed a change management and engagement program to make sustainability a shared experience. Storytelling touchpoints, such as prompts to “spot reclaimed materials” turned the office into an interactive learning environment.

Regular updates and visual dashboards communicated progress, reinforcing transparency and pride. The project also engaged contractors and suppliers in adopting new circular practices, from disassembly protocols to non-toxic finishing methods, strengthening the local sustainability supply chain. Through co-creation and shared accountability, stakeholders became champions of its vision, extending the impact far beyond the office walls.

## **6. Outcomes & Impact**

What were the final outcomes achieved, and how did they align with the defined objectives and key metrics? How did the project exceed or fall short of initial goals? (20 points, max 400 words)

DBS Office @ Hong Lim achieved, and in many areas exceeded its sustainability and wellness objectives.

### Environmental Outcomes

- 94% reuse of existing ceilings, lighting, and gypsum
- 89% reuse of partitions and glazing
- 77% reuse of loose furniture
- 151 reclaimed wood tabletops crafted for reuse
- 926 m<sup>2</sup> of glue-free carpet tiles installed
- 147 restored task chairs and 30 reused metal cabinets

These efforts resulted in substantial reductions in embodied carbon and construction waste, proving that refurbishment can deliver impact comparable to, or greater than, new builds.

### Cultural & Human Impact

The integrated awareness campaign turned the office into an ongoing learning ecosystem, sustaining long-term awareness and engagement. Employees became active participants in DBS's sustainability journey, shifting workplace behaviour toward conscious stewardship.

### Industry & Legacy Impact

The Hong Lim office sets a precedent for regenerative retrofits in Singapore's corporate sector. By proving that circular design can be both feasible and aspirational, it positions DBS as an industry leader accelerating sustainable real estate practices.