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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **LOCAL ARCHITECTURE STUDENTS WIN OPPORTUNITY TO COMPETE ON THE GLOBAL STAGE**

Thanks to an international competition which identifies and develops tomorrow's architectural talent, two teams of South African students have the opportunity to compete on the global stage at the 15<sup>th</sup> Saint-Gobain Multi Comfort Student Contest.

For the fourth consecutive year, South African students showcased sustainable design in construction in the local leg of the contest which encourages students studying architecture, engineering and other related disciplines to address energy efficiency and comfort in the built environment.

The contest required participants to create a vision for a future sustainable development of Crescenzago metro station area in Milan (Italy), involving the renovation of three existing buildings connected with a new mix-used development including residential, public spaces and services. Key is the provision of comfort, performance and safety, while addressing the challenges of sustainable construction, resource efficiency and climate change.

The winning team from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Mohammed Shah and Neeshailin Naicker, titled their proposal Tree A.I. Their project aimed to biomimic the elemental functions of a tree in nature, reinterpreting the elements of fire, air, water and earth. The team was successful in addressing the three areas of work, live and play, and the application of their strong conceptual response was refreshing and encouraging.

The Green Link, an entry from the University of Johannesburg's Daniella Veloza and Almie van Niekerk, was placed second. Driven by several key themes – greenery, intervention across many levels and shortcuts for the public and residents – this proposal provided a firm climatic and contextual approach layered over a sensitive understanding of people movement, requirements and behaviour.

According to Sathia Govender, Technical Specialist at Saint-Gobain, sustainability, comfort and the integration of energy efficiency is becoming integral to the contemporary architecture planning and building process. "Saint-Gobain's Multi Comfort philosophy underlines the importance of the different dimensions of comfort (thermal, acoustic, indoor air quality, visual). The more these elements are incorporated into design, the sooner the built environment will be able to respond to these needs," he says.

He adds that South African entries have shone at previous Multi Comfort awards, having won first prize in 2018 and second prize in 2016.

“This is testament to the local design and architectural community’s ability to compete at a global level and it emphasises the high standard of architectural education in South Africa.”

Govender’s comments were echoed by one of the judges, Derick Henstra, Executive Chairman at DHK, who said it was gratifying to see the extremely high quality of the work presented. More importantly, the best thing about the two winning teams, is that their plans are very buildable.

Joining Govender and Henstra on the local judging panel was a team of impressive industry representatives: Ayanda Masuku, Senior Specialist: City transformation and spatial planning; Cliff Gouws, Architectural Team Leader at Boogertman + Partners Pretoria; and Ravindra Nagar, Mechanical Engineer at Aurecon.

The winners will travel to Milan, Italy to take part in the final contest on 4 June.

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