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The EBie Awards: All Together Now

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Now in its second year, the EBie Awards from Urban Green Council, USGBC New York, are a nationwide **juried competition** for people working in **E**xisting **B**uildings who have made great strides in improving environmental performance but whose accomplishments may otherwise go unheralded. Like the Oscars, there are multiple awards – but instead of Best Actor (or Best Key Grip) we have categories like *Shine A Light On Me* for the best lighting retrofit, and *The Reformed Drinker* for water savings. It's sustainability in buildings, but sexy, with a glitzy awards ceremony (held at the Hard Rock Cafe Theatre in Times Square) for finalists and winners.

This year, we have added a new award for those people who work in multiple buildings: ***All Together Now***, which recognizes the most improved portfolio across multiple sustainability categories, including water, waste management, stormwater, materials use, indoor environmental quality, and tenant engagement. The award is similar to the *The All-Rounder*, which is for a single building, but is designed for entrants who own, operate, or manage a group of buildings and improve their combined environmental performance. We expect that some of the biggest real improvements (not per square foot, but total water or energy savings) will come from portfolios, simply due to their size.

Working across a portfolio doesn't mean you do different things, but it does change how you go about it. On the positive side, there's lots of opportunity for lessons learned as conservation measures are repeated over and over (and over and over). Economies of scale come into play: once,when buying occupancy sensors for a campus-wide renovation, I found the price dropped by more than half when ordering 1,000 sensors instead of 100. Repetition can improve efficiency as project managers, purchasing agents, suppliers, and contractors develop good habits, and once-innovative processes become routine. And it's much easier to get project approval from the right people – building occupants and top management – with a proven track record of success within the same portfolio.

Of course, it's not always easy "scaling up." Despite the benefits of experience, it can seem like every situation is unique in its own way. It can be very difficult to give individual projects the attention they deserve when trying to be effective across 10, 100, or even 500 buildings. And going big too fast can have real costs if inventory is purchased and then plans change or deadlines are missed. Finally, the sheer effort required to create change in multiple buildings at once can be daunting right from the outset.

That's why we created the EBies *All Together Now* portfolio award – to recognize the special opportunities and challenges that come from managing a portfolio. We're looking forward to honoring the people making it happen across a group of buildings. If that's you, go to ebies.org to find more details about how to apply and the definition of award categories and portfolios. **The deadline for submissions is February 26**, and we'll be honoring finalists and the winners in New York City on June 19, 2013. See you there!

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