

Achieve climate goals in real estate with active management

Fabio Oliveira, Senior ESG Officer, Zurich Invest Ltd
Peter Bezak, Senior Economist, Zurich Invest Ltd

The building sector plays a key role in the fight against climate change. More than a third of global energy consumption and about 40 percent of global greenhouse emissions are caused by the real estate sector. In Switzerland, this sector also makes a significant contribution to national greenhouse gas emissions, accounting for over 20 percent. Since 1990, emissions have already been cut by more than 30 percent. To curb climate change, however, there is an urgent need for further reduction.

Positive impact on sustainable energy balance

To cut greenhouse emissions in the real estate sector, active real estate management is a must. Real estate accounts for a substantial portion of carbon emissions. In the portfolio context, it is thus imperative to systematically address this area. With a view to climate protection, active management of energy consumption and fuel emissions is vital to ensure a profound impact on the sustainable energy balance of a building. Sustainable building and real estate management are key aspects of both asset and building management.

Zurich Invest Ltd makes use of renewable energy sources in all its real estate portfolios. Suitable processes are used in all areas of building management. Since 2010, carbon emissions have already been reduced by more than 20 percent. To reach climate neutrality by 2050, the company also intends to reduce carbon emissions by an additional 20 percent by 2025 and to qualify for three stars in the GRESB rating.

Action taken to achieve net zero

At Zurich Invest Ltd a clearly defined package of measures was assembled to achieve the climate targets. Optimising the operation of heating systems is just one example of how first successes can be achieved quickly and in the short term. In the medium and long term, energy efficiency and carbon reduction targets can be achieved by building and renovating according to the Minergie standard. Over time, these measures, along with the use of renewable energies will replace fossil fuels fully. Zurich Invest Ltd endeavors to reach its climate goals in its transactions, asset management and renovation/new building projects.