

American, Cameroonian Partner To Transfer Insulated Panels Technology

By Joe Dixca PEPOT

The Founder of Therma Save Worldwide of Alabama in America, Hoot Haddock, and the Executive Director of Southwest International Construction Corporation of Cameroon, SICC, Brigitte Soppo Ngalle, August 21, signed a convention for the transfer of technology for the manufacturing of Therma Save panels to Cameroon.

The convention was signed at the newly constructed factory for the manufacturing of Therma Save panels in Bassa, Douala, in the presence of the Political-Economic Section Chief at the US Embassy in Yaounde, Sara Devlin.

Cameroonian born Brigitte Soppo Ngalle, who lived in America in the past, was captivated by the Therma Save building system.

She then contacted Hoot Haddock, the man who developed the technology for the building of houses.

After a series of discussions between the two, an initial agreement was reached for Haddock to transfer the technology to Cameroon, if Ngalle could find good housing projects.

Also, a factory was needed in Cameroon for the manufacturing of the panels before the technology could be transferred.

The Search For Projects

Meanwhile, after returning to Cameroon, Ngalle founded the SICC. The company decided to engage in low cost housing and conceived the Garden Community Housing Project in Yassa, Douala.

But SICC needed a big project to justify the investment of FCFA billion for the construction of a Therma Save panels manufacturing factory in Cameroon for the building project.

A few years later, Ngalle's company won the bid for the multi billion francs Congo Market Project in Douala.

But to concretise the agreement with Haddock, a factory for the fabrication of panels was needed in Douala. The factory was eventually built.



From (L-R) Ngalle, Haddock, signing technology accord

After the completion of the factory project, negotiations between Haddock and Ngalle for Therma Save Worldwide LLC to grant SICC the license for production of the Thermal Save panels in Cameroon had to move to the final stage.

Haddock had to travel to Cameroon to visit the factory and then sign the convention.

On August 21, Haddock accompanied by his wife, Ann, landed in Douala to sign the partnership accord.

Speaking at the August 21 event, the American couple expressed satisfaction with the newly constructed manufacturing factory in Cameroon.

They said after their return to America, their 51-year-old son, who is now managing the family business, will travel to Cameroon to assist SICC in training technicians on how to efficiently cut the panels into different sizes and also how to erect the panel buildings.

SICC workers will also be trained on quality control in the production of the pan-

els. This is to ensure that the panels manufactured in Cameroon are of international standard.

International Accreditation

The American firm has numerous accreditations, including the International Code Council, ICC, accreditation 2406 reports.

"This is the ultimate approval, and confirms we (Therma Save Worldwide LLC) meet all areas in international code. All building officials are members. It also confirms we have a very strict quality control programme that is monitored by ICC, and allowing their stamp to be placed on all Therma Save panels.

In case of a problem, ICC can make inspection and determine whether it is the material used or the panel bond. If it is found to be the material, then the manufacturer of that particular material is responsible. If it is the bond, then the adhesive manufacturer or the panel manufacturer is

responsible," read an excerpt of a release given to reporters at the occasion.

The Therma Save Worldwide LLC has also received the Florida Building Code FL10146, which certifies that their panels withstand hurricanes and tornadoes and the California Code which certifies that their cement board panels can withstand earthquakes and bushfires.

"The Therma Save system using cement board panels is resistant to moisture, thus eliminate high risk of mould, mildew, decay and insect. With Therma Save cement board panels, a protective covering on the exterior is unnecessary. Also, the panels have a fire rating, eliminating the need for sheet rock on the interior."

Meanwhile, the Executive Director of SICC, Brigitte Soppo Ngalle, said scientific studies were meticulously carried out in Cameroon and the Therma Save system was confirmed to be very suitable to the environment. She noted that in Cameroon, houses have over the years been generally built either with blocks or wood.

"Bringing to Cameroon the Therma Save system will give the Cameroon population another choice of building material, and also provide them the opportunity of benefiting from the several advantages that the insulated building system brings. People should have a choice," she stressed.

Encouragement by US Embassy

The Political-Economic Section Chief at the US Embassy, Sara Devlin, said the message she brought to Ngalle was that of encouragement.

She said the number of projects that SICC has in hand that include a factory to manufacture Therma Save panels as well as the Congo Market Project, and the housing estate project, are things that will create hundreds of jobs for Cameroonians, especially the youths. "We have a policy to encourage good projects that can create jobs, especially for the youths, in Cameroon. The creation of jobs is also very important to get the economy going," the Diplomat asserted.