

# From Energy Burden to Business Edge: DIMO's Smart Building Drive

STRATEGIC ENERGY MANAGEMENT AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION ARE RESHAPING BUILDINGS

Buildings today are strategic assets. They shape how people live, work, and do business.

With people spending nearly 90% of their lives indoors, comfort, safety, and security are no longer luxuries. They are baseline expectations. Whether it is a corporate HQ, a mixed-use complex, or a high-rise residence, building performance now plays a role in talent retention, customer experience, and business continuity.

Yet the very systems that define modern buildings, such as air conditioning, lighting, elevators, and data networks, also drive up energy use. As global energy prices rise, Sri Lankan companies are feeling the strain. Samantha Gunawardana,

Chief Technology Officer of Building Services at DIMO, explains how businesses can manage rising energy costs, improve efficiency through smart systems, and prepare their operations for a more evolving energy future.

## How are escalating energy costs impacting corporations today, and what risks or pressures does this create for their operations and bottom line?

Energy consumption has become one of the largest operating expenses for commercial buildings. Air conditioning and ventilation alone often account for nearly 50% of a facility's energy bill, with lighting contributing another 15% to 20%. These costs pose a significant risk to profitability amidst an era where global energy volatility shows no signs of easing. Compounding

the issue is a development mindset that prioritises capital expenditure over long-term efficiency. Many build-to-sell or lease projects focus on minimising upfront costs, leaving tenants to face rising utility bills and inefficient systems that ultimately weaken business competitiveness.

## What practical steps can corporations take to better manage their energy consumption, and in this context, what kind of solutions does DIMO provide to address these challenges?

To remain competitive, companies must look beyond reactive cost-cutting and adopt proactive energy management strategies. Understanding how and where energy is consumed, and then deploying technologies that perform efficiently is the key.

DIMO integrates advanced building automation and lighting control systems that optimise usage without sacrificing comfort. Our solutions go beyond air-conditioning controls to fully integrated Building Management Systems (BMS), unifying HVAC, lighting, security, plumbing and other services on one platform, leading to nearly 30% reduction in energy costs and far greater operational visibility. As buildings become increasingly digitised, they generate valuable operational data. However, much of it remains underutilised. Working with global technology partners such as Siemens, DIMO offers cloud-based platforms that analyse,

compare and optimise this data to enable predictive maintenance, fine-tune performance and unlock further savings.

## What exactly is energy performance contracting, and why is it gaining traction in the markets?

Energy Performance Contracting (EPC) is one of the most promising models for achieving sustainable energy efficiency. Unlike traditional retrofit projects, EPC shifts much of the financial and operational responsibility to the Energy Services Company (ESCO).

The ESCO conducts the consultancy, designs and installs the solutions, and guarantees a specific level of energy savings. Clients can choose between a guar-

anteed savings model, where performance risk remains with the ESCO, or a shared savings model, where savings are split between both parties, with improvements such as upgrading building control systems, HVAC equipment, lighting, renewable energy generation, water conservation and waste management solutions.

The benefits extend beyond energy savings. Organisations eliminate upfront investment risk, enjoy seamless and reliable operations, reduce spare part and maintenance costs, and lighten the workload of operational staff, whilst contributing to reduce their carbon footprint: an increasingly important factor for corporate sustainability reporting and investor confidence.

**Samantha Gunawardana,**  
Chief Technology Officer of Building Services, DIMO

## To what extent can corporations realistically reduce their energy consumption with these systems, and how does the return on investment vary across different industries?

With the right technologies and performance measures, corporations can cut energy use by 15-30%, often achieving payback within two to five years. Facilities with long operating hours such as hospitals, airports, hotels, and retail centres will gain the most. Even where direct savings are modest, indirect returns are significant: higher property value, greater comfort, reduced downtime, and stronger ESG performance all reinforce long-term growth and resilience.

## What are the latest global developments in energy-saving technologies that Sri Lankan corporates could adopt to stay competitive and sustainable?

Globally, the future of energy-efficient buildings is being shaped by technologies such as Building Information Modelling (BIM), predictive analytics, and digital twin platforms. These innovations enable developers, operators, and investors to model performance, test scenarios and continuously optimise energy use across the building lifecycle.

Sri Lankan corporates have a unique opportunity to leap into this new era. However, doing so calls for collaboration between the private sector, regulators and policymakers alike. Updated building codes, performance-based incentives, and targeted subsidies can accelerate adoption, reduce strain on national power infrastructure, and support the country's sustainability goals. Energy efficiency is no longer a technical afterthought, but a strategic imperative. Buildings optimised for performance, cut costs, reduce risk and create a competitive edge. For Sri Lankan businesses, the message is clear: smarter buildings are smarter investments.●