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## IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# **COP21: RICS joins in mobilizing professionals to reduce the impact of buildings on the climate.**

### ***In U.S., RICS working to promote high-performing public buildings***

PARIS – RICS will today join governments, building and construction organizations and funding agencies to launch the *Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction*. The Alliance is a worldwide building sector network backed by the governments of France, Germany, Japan, United Arab Emirates and Cameroon, amongst others. The Alliance will launch at the first-ever United Nations (UN) *Buildings Day*, to be held during the 21<sup>st</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP21) global climate conference. The Alliance is a joint initiative between the French Government, as host of COP21, and the UN's Environment Programme.

RICS has joined the alliance as an *initiating partner* in our capacity as a global professional body. In particular, RICS professionals can play a key role in mobilising capital to invest in energy-efficient and sustainable buildings. Here are a few key points on how RICS is relevant to the aims of the Global Alliance:

- The buildings and construction sector is at the centre of economic growth globally. However, the sector is one of the biggest emitters of carbon dioxide, a major cause of global warming. RICS has committed to work with its professionals to drive down emissions throughout the property lifecycle.
- The commitments made by governments at COP21 require consistent instruments to monitor and measure progress. RICS promotes international standards that measure buildings and construction materials consistently and underpin global climate goals. These standards are implemented and regulated by RICS professionals the world over.
- RICS, through initiatives such as the RICS School for the Built Environment in India, is addressing the skills gap and building capacity for professionals in areas such as sustainability, energy efficiency and building resilience. This is particularly important in light of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's comments at COP21 that the lack of skills is a key barrier to development in emerging economies.

On Thursday afternoon in Paris, RICS President Martin Bruehl FRICS will deliver a key message to partners of the Global Alliance on how international standards can drive investment in sustainable buildings.

In the United States, RICS is collaborating with the National Institute of Building Sciences (NIBS) to explore how Public-Private Partnerships (P3) could help promote the construction of High-Performing Buildings (HBP). The two organizations see this as a way to both encourage public-private partnerships and reduce carbon emissions from public-sector buildings. Working with NIBS, RICS hopes to encourage the public

sector to partner with the private sector to construct High-Performing Buildings. Using P3 partnerships to encourage not only design and construction of high-performing buildings, but also place greater emphasis on operations and maintenance (O&M) performance and efficiency, could promote sustainability and carbon reduction over a building's entire life cycle.

In this context especially, RICS is very pleased to have a presence at COP21 with the U.S. government, as represented by the Department of Energy. The Department, along with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, have created Tenant Star, a commercial tenant-focused version of EPA's highly successful Energy Star for buildings program. Tenant Star provides a variety of tools to promote energy efficiency, measure and benchmark energy consumption, and certify properties that achieve certain energy efficiency levels.

The NIBS-RICS effort is similar, with a strong focus on increasing buildings' O&M efficiency. This initiative will help promote an alternative for the public sector to meet its real estate needs, and do so in a way that leads to more energy-efficient buildings. Both the NIBS-RICS effort and Tenant Star recognize that emphasizing the O&M portion of the built environment could help leverage carbon reductions over the multiple decades of a facility's operation.

**For more information: RICS at COP21 in Paris:** <http://www.rics.org/uk/news/rics-at-cop21/> and follow #RICSCOP21

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**Note to editors:**

Read our thought leadership on COP 21 and related issues:

- Impacting on the future of every person on the planet by Sean Tompkins, RICS Chief Executive Officer
- The cost of change: saving the climate is not cheap by Simon Rubensohn, RICS Chief Economist
- Collective action: achieve more, and faster by Curt Garrigan, Coordinator, Sustainable Buildings and Climate Initiative, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

- [High-performing-buildings: Less on looks, more on performance](#) by Neil Shah, RICS Americas Managing Director
- [Responsible business](#) by Ursula Hartenberger, RICS Global Head of Sustainability

**About RICS:**

RICS promotes and enforces the highest professional qualifications and standards in the development and management of land, real estate, construction and infrastructure. Our name promises the consistent delivery of standards – bringing confidence to the markets we serve. We accredit 118,000 professionals and any individual or firm registered with RICS is subject to our quality assurance. With offices covering the major political and financial centres of the world, our market presence means we are ideally placed to influence policy and embed professional standards. We work at a cross-governmental level, delivering international standards that will support a safe and vibrant marketplace in land, real estate, construction and infrastructure, for the benefit of all.