



2101 L Street NW,
Suite 500
Washington, DC 20037
T: 202 828-7422
F: 202 828-5110
www.usgbc.org

FAQ

Evolution of Wood Certification in LEED, Second Public Comment Period

What is the overall revision being proposed to the LEED green building certification program regarding how it treats wood?

On the whole, the focus of the proposed LEED credit language changes is on transparency, setting forth a clear set of metrics that any forest certification system must meet in order to be recognized within LEED. Currently, only wood products certified by the Forest Stewardship Council help projects earn LEED points.

Under the newly proposed credit language, wood certification systems would be evaluated for eligibility to help earn points toward LEED certification against the USGBC Forest Certification Benchmark (“the Benchmark”), which includes four sections of criteria:

- Governance
- Standards Substance
- Chain of Custody and Labeling
- Accreditation and Auditing

If the revisions are approved by USGBC membership, wood certified under schemes deemed compliant after a third-party evaluation against the Benchmark will be recognized by LEED and could earn a project one or more points toward LEED certification. If a scheme is deemed non-compliant, the certification scheme administrators would have a clear understanding of what modifications are necessary to receive recognition under LEED.

What revisions are new in this second public comment period?

Building on the proposed revisions from the August-September 2008 public comment period, USGBC presents the additional revisions to the Benchmark and the Materials and Resources (MR) credits that recognize the use of certified wood products. The revisions to the Benchmark largely consist of clarified requirements, elaborated requirements, and – if no requirement will be included for a particular issue – an explanation of why the requirement is not included. The credit revisions feature a new performance-based method for recognizing the use of certified wood.

Which documents are open for public comment?

Documents open for public comment include the revised criteria of the USGBC Forest Certification Benchmark criteria as well as additional, redlined changes to:

- LEED 2009, New Construction, MR Credit 7, Certified Wood
- LEED 2009, Schools, MR Credit 7, Certified Wood
- LEED 2009, Commercial Interiors, MR Credit 7, Certified Wood
- LEED 2009, Core and Shell, MR Credit 6, Certified Wood



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- LEED 2009, Existing Buildings: Operations and Maintenance, MR Credit 1: Sustainable Purchasing – Ongoing Consumables
- LEED 2009, Existing Buildings: Operations and Maintenance, MR Credit 2: Sustainable Purchasing – Durable Goods
- LEED 2009, Existing Buildings: Operations and Maintenance, MR Credit 3: Sustainable Purchasing – Facility Alterations and Additions
- LEED for Homes, Materials and Resources 2, Environmentally Preferable Materials

How long is the second public comment period?

The second public comment period for is 30 days, which is 15 days longer than previous USGBC second public comment periods. This public comment period will open on September 15, 2009, and will close on October 14, 2009, at 5:00 PM PST.

Do I need to be a USGBC member to submit a comment?

No, the comment process is open to the public. If you do not have a USGBC site user account, you will be asked to create an account before submitting comments.

Where do I submit comments?

Comments can be submitted on the [LEED Rating System Drafts page](#).

How does this affect new and old rating systems?

If approved by USGBC member ballot, the revised credit language becomes the basis of credits dealing with wood certification for all projects registered after credit approval. Projects registered after approval will be required to adhere to the revisions without the option of using the original credit requirements. Projects registered prior to the approval may use the revisions as an optional compliance path; this alternative compliance path will exist for projects registered under either a LEED 2009 or a pre-LEED 2009 rating system (LEED for New Construction and Major Renovations v2.2, LEED for Schools 2008, LEED for Commercial Interiors v2.0, LEED for Existing Buildings v2.0, and LEED for Core and Shell v2.0) as well as LEED for Homes.

How can I learn more?

Detailed information about specific proposed technical changes to the rating system can be found in the [Introduction and Executive Summary Document](#).