

**Foundations of the
Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design™
Environmental Rating System
A Tool for Market Transformation**



LEED™ Policy Manual

Spring 2003
LEED™ Steering Committee

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Mission of LEED™

LEED™ encourages and accelerates global adoption of sustainable green building and development practices through the creation and implementation of universally understood and accepted standards, tools and performance criteria.

SECTION 1

Purpose of this Document

This Foundations of LEED™ Green Building Rating System (LEED™ Foundations Document) is intended to be a blueprint for the market-transformation process to be achieved through the ongoing refinement and development of LEED™ and the procedures that support it. This document is a work in-progress that will be updated on a regular basis as the LEED™ product portfolio evolves and becomes implemented with different market sectors.

The Foundations document is required reading for all LEED™ Steering Committee members and all Chairs and Vice Chairs of LEED™ Horizontal and Vertical Market Product Committees, as well as Technical Advisory Groups, Curriculum/Accreditation Committee and the Technical and Scientific Advisory Committee (TSAC). It is also recommended reading for all USGBC Board members and other Sub-Committee Chairs.

This manual is the first in a series which collectively comprise the Foundations Documents for the LEED™ Green Building Rating System. This includes:

LEED™ Policy Manual

LEED™ Product Development and Maintenance Manual

LEED™ Committee Charters

These documents should be read together for a comprehensive understanding of the Foundations of LEED™.

The LEED™ Policy Manual describes USGBC policy for consensus based development of the LEED™ family of products, their implementation and promotion in the marketplace and the education, outreach and other support activities to maximize the acceptance and uptake of LEED™ products in their respective markets both nationally and internationally. The manual also describes USGBC's policy for protection of the LEED™ brand and integrity.

SECTION 2

The LEED™ Vision for Market Transformation

The buildings that we live in work from and enjoy during our leisure activities represent the largest contributions to anthropogenic environmental impacts and resource depletion and threaten our environmental, economic and social sustainability either directly or indirectly.

Designing, constructing and operating our built environments in harmony with the natural environment can and must be accomplished. For humankind to have a future we must learn to live within the flows of nature and we must reduce the wastes and pollution from our activities to levels that can be accommodated by the earth's natural systems. It is to this future the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) is committed. The USGBC is the foremost advocate of transforming the building and real estate market towards sustainability while promoting human health, environmental restoration, economic prosperity and social welfare and equity.

USGBC is committed through its development and implementation of the LEED™ Green Building rating system to transforming the market so that green buildings become accepted as commonplace. The green building movement is now beginning to make spectacular advances in building technologies, integrated design and operating practice.

Enduring buildings are ones that prove adaptable to change in their surroundings and in their use. LEED™ must also grow and adapt as we learn more about sustainability and to keep promoting change within its target markets.

The Essence of LEED™

LEED™ is a product of the U.S. Green Building Council:

- It is identified with the USGBC and supports and advances the Council's mission
- It is consistent with the governing principles, goals, objectives and processes of the Council
- It continually garners input from the USGBC membership and outside experts whose participation represents a diverse and broad coalition of building industry stakeholders

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design—LEED™:

- Is the most extensive, authoritative and well recognized *certification standard* that distinguishes green buildings by design, construction and operation from the rest of the market
- Is a *design guideline* to move building construction and operation toward sustainability
- Is an integrated green building design *training program* to encourage best practice and provide support to the entire real estate industry

- Is a professional accreditation system to distinguish and recognize individual professionals for their expertise in the design, construction and operation of green buildings and achievement of LEED certification

LEED™ is a brand:

- Recognized as the benchmark for green design and development throughout the building industry in the US and increasingly overseas
- Known for its credibility and integrity
- In demand from private and public building owner/occupant/tenants, as well as key decision makers in design, construction, operation and management
- In demand from State and Local governments as a vehicle for design and operation of their own property portfolios and as a vehicle for local policy implementation and incentives
- In demand from high environmental quality speculative developers wishing to distinguish themselves from the rest for their buildings
- Protected and advanced in the marketplace by the USGBC nationally and internationally

LEED™ is a flexible, yet consistent rating system:

- That offers an ongoing development process that is broad and flexible and inclusive of the needs of horizontal markets and different building types within these markets or regions, while maintaining the integrity of the system's goals and objectives
- That is adaptable to new processes and technologies or locations while maintaining consistency in adherence to core principles
- That provides objective, clear, concise, objective, actionable, verifiable and documentable criteria for crediting green building performance
- That is updated regularly to take account of new knowledge about the environmental impacts from buildings and their relative importance, while providing sufficient time for the building industry to adapt to these updates

LEED™ operates on sound business principles and practices:

- Generates its own sustainable revenues for administration, customer support, training and ongoing program development
- Benefits from sponsorship for the development of new LEED™ products and variants
- It works from realistic budgets

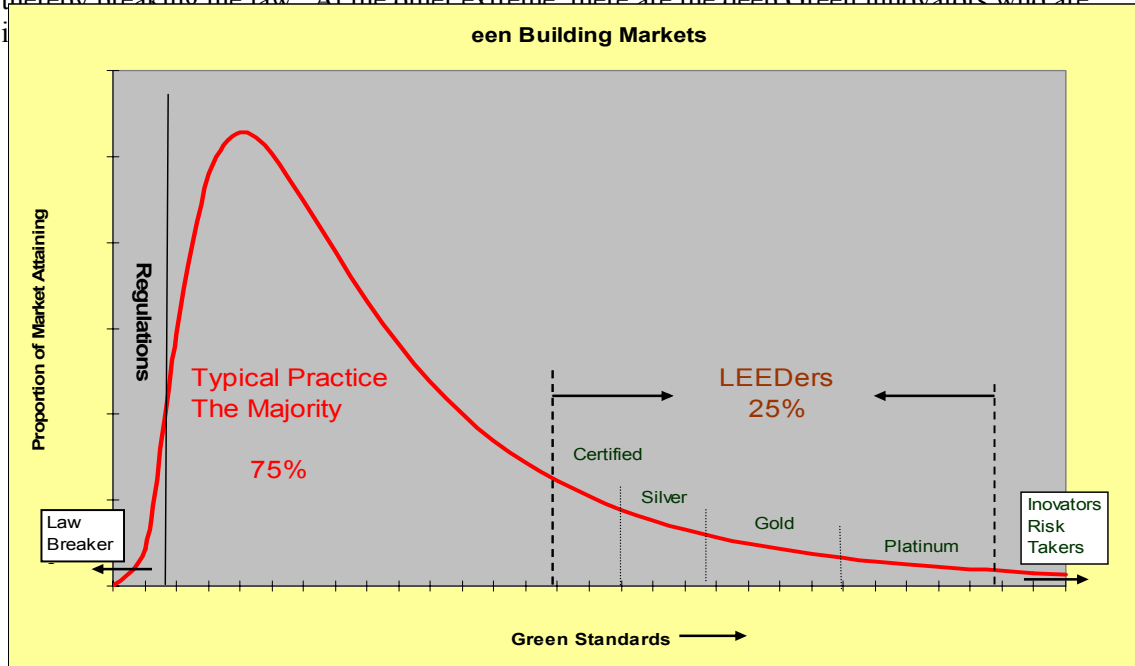
LEED™ Strategic Goals

The LEED™ Green Building Rating System will strive to:
Promote the tangible and intangible benefits of green buildings including environmental, economic and social benefits over the life cycle of buildings.

- Achieve high profile and successful product launches.
- Earn widespread and routine endorsement by private and public real estate industry leaders and stakeholders.
- Earn widespread and routine endorsement by Federal, State and Local Government and adoption as a vehicle for policy development and implementation.
- Deliver superior customer service that is professional, timely, and targeted to the customer's needs.
- Offer a comprehensive portfolio of programs to meet the diverse needs of the real estate industry.
- Develop innovative technical tools and support services for LEED™ products.
- To consolidate LEED™ as the standard for green building practices for our homes, non-residential buildings and developments throughout the U.S. and internationally.
- Lead the industry state of knowledge about practical implementation of the most up-to-date and practical innovations.
- Improve LEED's™ performance criteria as the industry gains experience with integrated design and green construction.

Positioning of LEED™ Standards in the Market

Buildings vary widely in the extent to which they exhibit green characteristics. The diagram overleaf shows how USGBC envisages that LEED is positioned to promote market transformation. The graph indicates that the majority of the market adopts a construction standard a little better than code and regulation, though some don't even achieve this level, thereby breaking the law. At the other extreme, there are the deep Green innovators who are



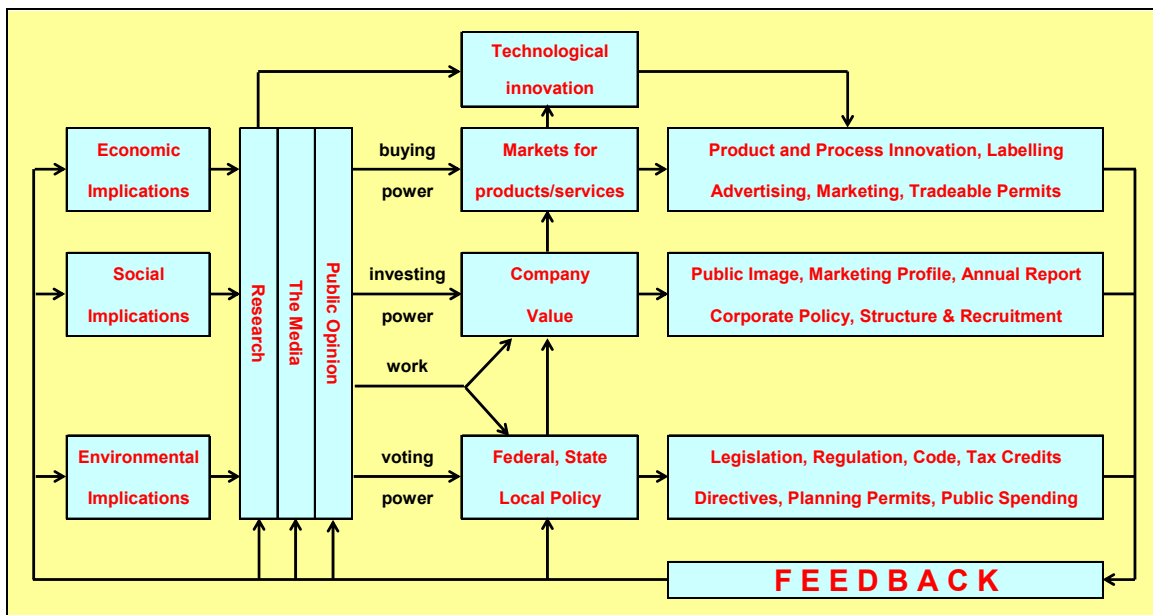
LEED is targeted at the early adopters of Green building practice. The third party assessed and certified performance represented by a LEED Certification signals the improved environmental credentials of these Green buildings to the market, allowing them to achieve premium value within their local markets. Although LEED is not targeted at the deeply green building, innovation credits do provide a mechanism for rewarding innovative green practice. Such innovations also provide ideas for future LEED credits. Equally, as LEED promotes green building practice into the mainstream, the level of performance needed to achieve LEED™ certification will rise to stay consistent with its focus on leading early adopters in the market.

How LEED™ Effects Market Transformation – Drivers for Change

For market transformation to be successful, it is important to understand what drives change. As demonstrated in the figure below, the drivers for change in green building markets can be traced back to the actual environmental, economic and social impacts that we all experience. Often these are not obvious and are only uncovered by research. The research findings only make a difference if they feel relevant to the general public and the media plays a key role in interpreting research findings so that they are understood by the general public. There are 4 things that the general public can actually do to make a difference:

1. they can change the things that they buy
2. they can choose where to invest their savings
3. they can vote for an administration sympathetic to their aims
4. they can choose where they wish to work and apply their labor

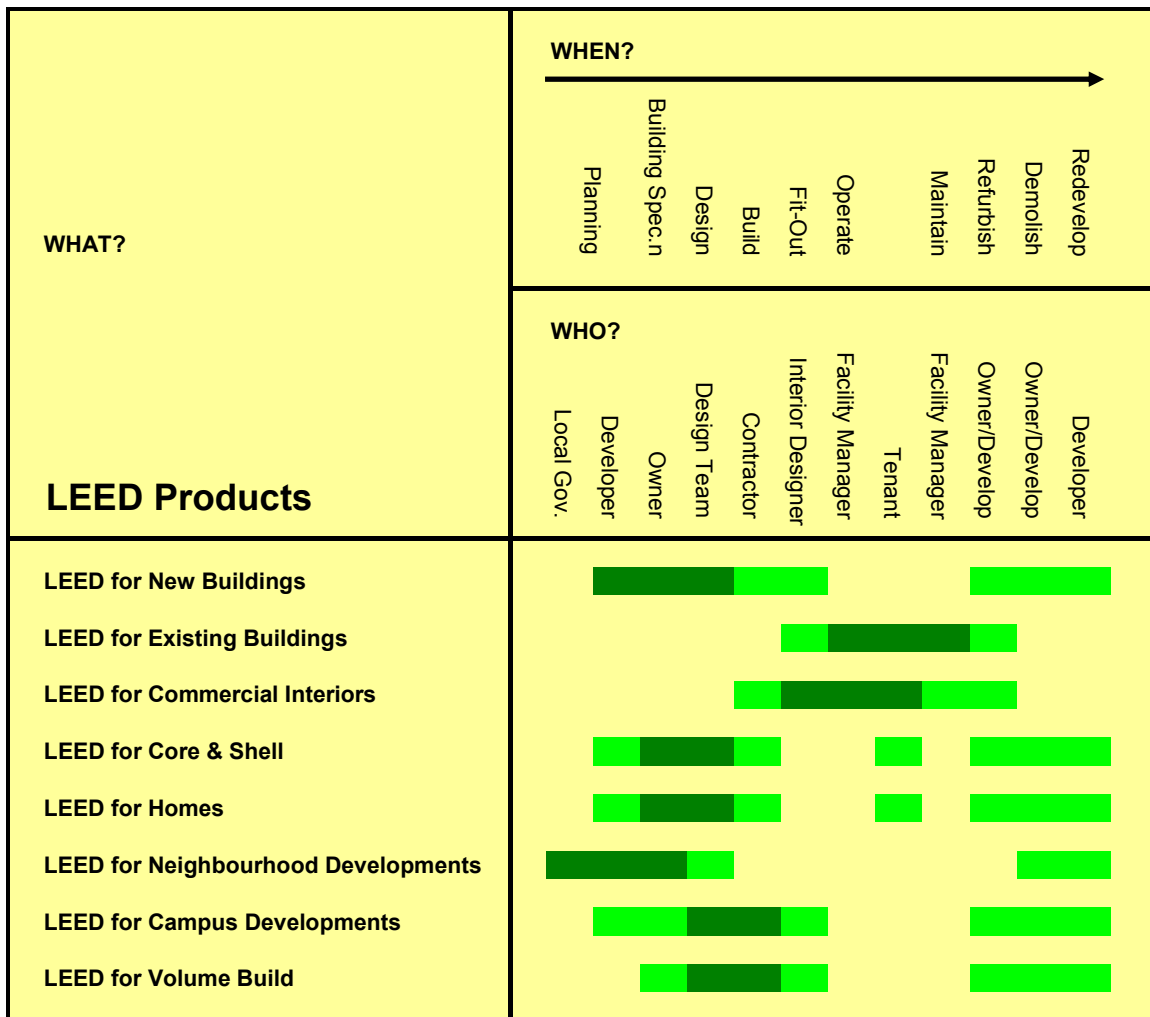
By signaling the otherwise invisible benefits of green buildings, LEED™ informs purchasing decisions that enhance the value of green buildings compared to alternatives. This can add real premium value to buildings that distinguish themselves in this way. Corporations can also choose to buy into green buildings as a way of signaling to their staff, their customers and their investors that they are an ethical organization that cares for the future. By buying into green buildings, commercial business can make a public statement about the ethos of their organization. In addition, they will save money directly on the running costs of their buildings, improve the productivity and health of their employees and attract and retain the best staff. People prefer to work in green buildings. The public like to invest ethically and ethical investment typically outperforms average investment so acting green is also wise investment. Public sector organizations can also signal their environmental credentials to their voters by investing in green buildings and by devising policy instruments that lever increased uptake of green buildings. LEED™ provides the perfect policy instrument for such policies.



LEED™ Portfolio of Products

Over its life, a building goes through different phases until it eventually becomes obsolete and is demolished or renovated and given a new lease of life. At each phase, different decision takers are influential to the buildings design and operation. Every decision has a client (who can determine the context of the decision) and a decision-taker (who implements the decision).

LEED provides the common language in which aspirations can be expressed (Client wants Gold) and decision-taker must deliver (Designer must design to achieve the credits for Gold). There are also indirect effects of the decisions informed by LEED ratings. This schematic shows the main phases in the life of a building and the key decision takers involved at each phase. The rows in the chart show the LEED Horizontal Market products developed or under development. The Green bars show who is being targeted by each of the LEED products – dark green bars are direct influences and light green are indirect. This chart reveals the goal of the USGBC to provide market transforming products and programs that span all major sectors and phases in the life of buildings.



Horizontal Market Products

The Horizontal Market products are the main LEED products. The Horizontal market products attempt to span the full range of possible building types and phases in the life of a building. Horizontal Market products have priority for Steering Committee volunteer time, as well as USGBC Staff time and budgetary resources.

Horizontal Market products must be developed to achieve the right balance between adaptation and tailoring for practical application within their target markets, whilst maintaining brand identity and consistency of standard and rigor across the LEED product range. Permissible adaptations are described in the LEED™ Product Development Handbook.

Horizontal Market products are developed by their own product committees in conjunction with the Technical Advisory Groups to ensure consistency. All Horizontal Market products are subject to review and approval by the LEED Steering Committee. All Horizontal market products must be piloted and balloted with the full USGBC membership before they will be launched and implemented by USGBC.

Building Sectors – Vertical Market Products

In some building sectors, there are specific technical features of the buildings or the processes that take place within them that demand special treatment.

In these instances, a LEED Application Guide gives specific advice on how to apply LEED and on any special exceptions or interpretations that can be used to deal with specific problems or simply to assist an application.

Vertical Market products are also developed by their own product committees and subject to review and approval by the LEED Steering Committee advised by the Technical Advisory groups to ensure consistency. Vertical Market products will also normally be piloted and balloted with the full USGBC membership before they will be launched and implemented by USGBC. Where an application guide makes no adaptation of credits and simply fulfills an educational or marketing role, there will be no need to pilot or ballot the Guide. Such cases will be at the discretion of the LEED Steering Committee.

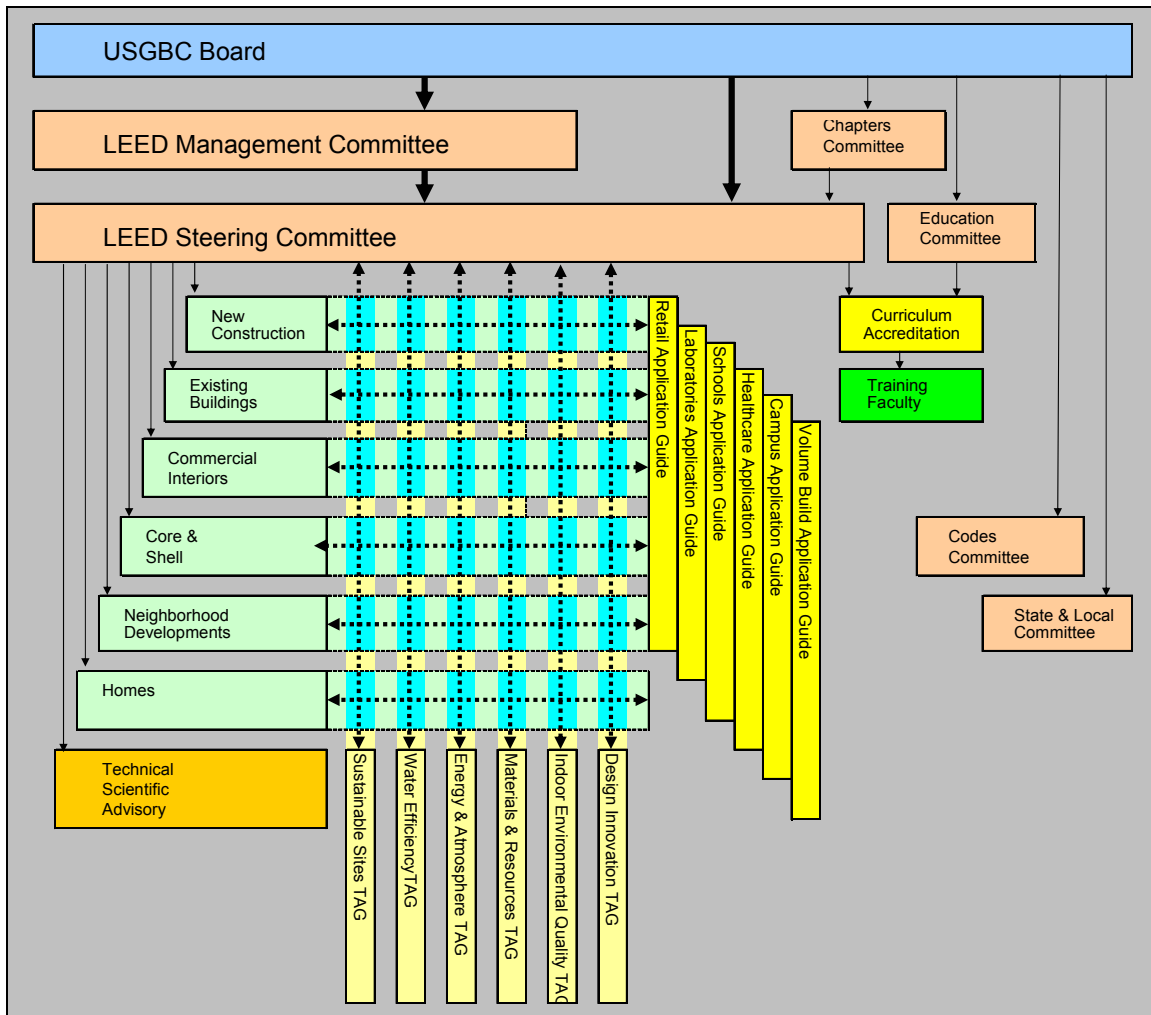
SECTION 3

LEED Committees

The dedication and expertise of the USGBC membership represents the LEED™ System’s most valuable asset. The Foundations Policy document outlines the basic structure and function of the LEED™ Committees

How LEED Committees are Organized

The following diagram shows how the LEED™ Management Committee and the LEED Steering Committee are at the heart of LEED™ operations. The diagram also shows how the other LEED™ Committees are organized by product and by technical field. The Product Committees are divided to address vertical and horizontal markets. Technical Advisory Groups support both Horizontal and Vertical Market Committees and provide consistency of approach and performance across the product range.



Steering Committee

Working together with LEED™ Staff and the USGBC Board, the Steering Committee is charged with overseeing development and delivery of the LEED™ product line consistent with the mission of LEED™ and the USGBC. The Steering Committee's role is to (1) Establish and enforce LEED direction and policy, (2) Delegate responsibility and, (3) Oversee subcommittee activities.

Management Sub-Committee

The LEED™ Management Committee is a subset of the Steering Committee that brings a particular management function expertise, as well as representation of each of the key interests present on the LEED Steering Committee. The purpose of the LEED Management Committee is to provide a forum for rapid decision-making where the full representation of interests from the full LEED Steering Committee is not needed or where executive decisions need to be made on behalf of the Steering Committee.

Horizontal Market Committees

Horizontal Product Committees work with the Steering Committee and LEED™ Staff to oversee efforts to bring each LEED™ Horizontal Product through the process of technical development, and to assist in the development of business, marketing and operations plans for the smooth and effective operation of each product line.

Vertical Market Committees

Vertical Market Committees adapt Horizontal Market rating criteria and supporting tools and products, etc. to the needs of particular Vertical Markets and develop Application Guides for use in these sectors (e.g. Retail, Laboratories, Hospitals, Schools). Unlike Horizontal Market Committees, Vertical Market Committees are not LEED™ standing sub-committees of the LEED SC – they are typically formed for the development of a specific product and disbanded thereafter.

Technical Scientific Advisory Committee (TSAC)

The TSAC is established to deal with issues that prove particularly contentious. It is empowered to constitute expert sub-groups to address each issue. Members of the sub-groups receive honoraria for their participation.

Curriculum/Accreditation Committee

The Curriculum/Accreditation Committee is jointly constituted by the Education Committee and the LEED Steering Committee with the specific role of developing and implementing the Council's own workshop program and Professional Accreditation Exam.

Adjunct Committees

Several other committees that report directly to the Board are also influential to LEED. The Chapters Committee is particularly influential since it represents the active membership at the local level and provides a primary mechanism for promoting LEED locally and for local LEED Education and Workshops. As a result, the Chapters

Committee is represented on the LEED Steering Committee and the LEED Management Committee. The State and Local Government Committee assists State & Local Government to adopt LEED and use it effectively as a policy instrument. The Codes Committee researches and negotiates with code writing bodies to remove barriers to green building innovation that are implicit or explicit within building codes. The Education Committee's mission is to work to integrate green building material into the curriculum and to undertake outreach to professionals to improve their capability in and experience of integrated design.

Committee Policies

The USGBC Board of Directors adopted a policy governing the composition and operation of all USGBC member Committees, including the LEED™ Committees. The following section attempts to describe a functional structure that implements the Board policy in a manner that is consistent with the realities of managing and operating the LEED™ System.

Consistent with the Board Policy, charters for each of the major Committee categories in LEED™: the Steering Committee, the Horizontal Market Product Committees, the Vertical Market Committees, the Technical Advisory Groups and the Technical and Scientific Advisory Committee are provided in a separate document. These Charters describe in detail the composition of each LEED™ Committee, its charge, its relationship to other Committees in the LEED™ system, and outlines Committee operation guidelines.

Aspects of the “Policies And Procedures For Committees” that apply to all LEED™ Committees are summarized below. The full policy may be found in the LEED™ Committee Charters document.

Conflict of Interest Policy

At all levels of decision-making in committees, persons casting votes and otherwise making decisions shall be aware of potential conflict of interest regarding the matter which is subject to the vote or decision. During discussion of such issues, Committee members will be required to disclose any and all such conflicts pursuant to the Council conflict of interest policy and shall recuse themselves from voting on such matters. **[COI policy is being reviewed and this paragraph should be updated to reflect that review upon completion.]**

Balance and Participation

The Council and the LEED Steering Committee will strive to involve different types of members in the discussions and consideration of proposed rating criteria as appropriate for the nature of criteria being considered. Unless otherwise noted, a minimum of 3 member categories will be represented on all LEED™ policy-making committees.

Given the explosive growth of the Council's membership over the last few years, it is a significant challenge to balance the desire to provide opportunities for participation in the

development of LEED™ with the need to maintain a manageable size of the volunteer committees. To accomplish this, the USGBC policy calls for the establishment of Core Committees and Corresponding Committees. Unless otherwise noted, all other LEED™ committees will be composed of a working Core Committee and a larger members-only Corresponding Committee that may be unlimited in size.

Core Committees

Core Committees have the primary role and responsibility for developing and implementing policy and/or elements under their jurisdiction. The LEED™ Steering Committee will be comprised only of Core Committee as described below.

LEED™ Core Committees are responsible for recommending policies to the Steering Committee and providing policy oversight to relevant programs. The Core Committee will be composed of an odd number of 7 to 11 members. Up to half of these members, including the Committee Chair and Vice-Chair, are appointed by the Steering Committee and approved by the USGBC Executive Committee. The remaining members are elected from the Corresponding Committee. A Secretary will be appointed or elected if no staff liaison serves in this capacity.

Corresponding Members

Unless otherwise noted, any number of USGBC members can join a Committee as Corresponding members. Corresponding members are placed on a listserv on the members only side of the website and will receive regular postings of minutes from Core Committee meetings and may submit comments on products in development and other projects to be considered by the appropriate Core Committee. All initial comments must be expressed in writing via the listserv. Depending on their workload, Core Committees should respond to Correspondents within 2-4 weeks. Core Committees may invite participation of Correspondents in their regular meeting at their discretion.

Committees may set rules for the time frame and means by which a desire to comment may be expressed. Committees may limit comments to written comments or allow personal presentations, at their discretion, unless otherwise instructed by the Board.

An email address will be available on the public side of the USGBC website to enable interested non-members to receive postings from the LEED™ Committee. These will be less frequent announcements compared to those made to the members' listserv.

Meeting Minutes.

Written minutes shall be taken at Steering Committee meetings and other committees, TAGs, technical committees, and membership meetings should also take minutes in accordance with Council policy. Copies of the minutes should be distributed to those who attend the meeting, should be reviewed for accuracy by attendees with corrections noted, and should be retained in the Council's files.

Technical Quality.

LEED™ committee discussions and decisions should be grounded on technical and scientific considerations of the highest quality. Horizontal and Vertical Market product committees should refer technical questions of concern to the Technical Advisory Groups for consideration as necessary. If an issue proves to be highly contentious or very difficult to resolve technically, then on the advice of the Technical Advisory Groups, the LEED™ Steering Committee may refer it to the Technical and Scientific Advisory Committee (TSAC).

Relative Roles of Volunteer Members and Staff

Consistent with volunteer-governing organizations, the Board and its designated committees are responsible for policy direction while the staff is responsible for effective implementation of policy and program operations. The line between roles is not always clear or rigid. As USGBC staffing expands, the relative roles of volunteers and staff will also evolve within this overarching context. This section provides guidance for how work will be accomplished for LEED™.

USGBC member/LEED™ Staff Interactions – Key Functions

Volunteer member Committees	Professional Staff
Develop overall strategy and policy as delegated by the USGBC Board of Directors	Develop and implement staffing, organizational structures and processes to effectively manage the LEED program and implement policies including LEED registration, customer service, certification, production and sale of materials, development and administration of the LEED workshop program and Accreditation exam.
Develop rating criteria	Report and advise on strategies and policies including rating criteria, funding and strategic partnerships, and to manage those partnerships
Evaluate and judge LEED™ applications, award certification levels	Review and make initial recommendations on LEED™ applicant building projects
Determine structure and composition of Committee and Subcommittees	Develop budgets and manage program expenditures within authorized budgets
Develop strategic partnerships	Initiate and manage contracts for support services and commissions
Identify and help develop funding opportunities in concert with CEO	Report progress on important benchmarks of LEED™ performance (for example, the number of project registrations, or number of professionals trained). Review and make initial recommendations on LEED™ applicant building projects
Help develop strategic plans for Business, Marketing and Operations	Provide secretariat to Committees

Reporting Relationships

LEED™ staff support the Committees but do not “report” to the Committees or individual members. The USGBC President & CEO is responsible for the overall performance of the organization including personnel and operations. However, to expedite communication and decisions, the President & CEO is also a member of the LEED™ Steering Committee and its Management Sub-Committee. The LEED™ Program Director also provides the main point of contact between the LEED Steering Committee and staff.

LEED™ Steering Committee/Management Sub-Committee Meetings Staff Support

LEED™ Staff assist in developing meeting agendas, including soliciting input and preparing necessary materials. Staff are also responsible for arranging meetings, encouraging Committee member participation, taking minutes and distributing them in a timely fashion to Committee members, submitting them for web posting. Exceptions to this can be determined by the Committee and Staff on a case-by-case basis.

Other LEED™ Committees – Staff Support

Although the aim is for every Committee to be supported by staff and staff numbers are increasing (commensurate with available resources), the burgeoning range of LEED products make it impossible to support all Committees fully at this time. LEED™ Staff support will be provided as fully as possible usually taking on the role of secretariat to Committees. Where this is not possible, committees will need to nominate a secretary from amongst their Core members to fulfill this role. In any event, every LEED committee has a nominated staff liaison contact.

SECTION 4

Protecting and Advancing the LEED™ Brand

If members of the USGBC are the LEED™ System's most valuable assets, then a close second is the value of the LEED™ brand and the intellectual capital comprised by the LEED™ rating criteria, the consensus processes for their development and the rigor, and consistency of the certification processes. These assets must be protected in order to protect the integrity of LEED™ and its further advance LEED™ in the market.

As LEED™ becomes widely used in the U.S. and internationally, upholding the rating system's core environmental performance levels while allowing for regional supplementation and sectoral and national adaptation becomes increasingly important. A LEED™ rating must mean the same to the market in all circumstances.

The following policies describe the procedures and guidelines that the USGBC has adopted to balance the tension between maximizing the effective dissemination and use of the LEED™ system while also protecting its core identity, integrity and consistency of standard.

The Structure of LEED™

The LEED™ Standard

The LEED™ standard is the heart of the LEED™ System. Since its release in 2000, the basic LEED™ standard is being adapted to an increasing array of Horizontal and Vertical Markets. It covers environmental actions in:

- Sustainable Sites
- Water Efficiency
- Energy and Atmosphere,
- Materials and Resources
- Indoor Environmental Quality
- Bonus Credits for Process and Design Innovation

All LEED™ standards contain three principal types of requirements:

- Prerequisites: Required elements all of which must be met before a project can be considered for LEED™ Certification.
- Core Credits: Specific actions a project may take in the five areas described above. All Core Credits are voluntary, but each level of LEED™ Certification requires that certain thresholds be met.
- Innovation Credits: "Extra credit" given for exemplary performance beyond Core Credit performance levels or implementation of innovative actions that confer significant environmental benefits not covered in the rating system.

Provided all Prerequisites are satisfied, the LEED™ Certification rating is determined by the numbers of credits achieved as follows:

- LEED™ Certified projects achieve at least 40% of the Core Credits
- LEED™ Silver projects achieve over 50% of the Core Credits
- LEED™ Gold projects achieve over 60% of the Core Credits
- LEED™ Platinum projects achieve over 80% of the Core Credits

The credits and prerequisites in all LEED versions are presented in a common format. This structure is considered part of the LEED™ brand and should be retained in all LEED versions:

- Intent
- Requirement
- Technologies / Strategies
- Documentation requirements and supporting “Letter Templates” (See below)

Future Revisions of LEED

Future revisions of the LEED™ rating criteria may expand Core Credits beyond the five categories noted above, adopt some established Innovation Bonus Credits as Core Credits and possibly eliminate some existing Core Credits. In addition, future systems may weight credits to better reflect their relative impacts on sustainability.

The Consensus Process

The committee structure, with its balanced representation of stakeholders and conflict of interest policies, ensures that the development of LEED versions is consensus based and even-handed. The Technical Advisory Groups ensure consistency and rigor in the development, interpretation and enforcement of the standards between LEED versions helping to assure the quality and integrity of the LEED brand. The balloting of new versions with the USGBC membership reinforces the open consensus process. The appeal processes and procedures implemented by the Council assure the fair treatment of individual LEED applicants. All of these measures are essential to protecting and enhancing the integrity, authority and value of the LEED Brand. Similar consensus based processes are used to support the development and implementation of the LEED workshop program and the LEED Professional Accreditation Exam.

In licensing LEED for use in other countries, the USGBC will ensure that any approved licensees establish similar consensus processes for the adaptation and implementation of LEED rating systems, Workshop programs and Accreditation Exams and therefore protect and reinforce the credibility and integrity of the LEED brand internationally

Actions for Brand Protection and Advancement

USGBC will protect the Brand for the family of LEED™ and USGBC products and services as follows:

- Maintain and enforce LEED™ trademark and copyright materials in the United States and other Countries as appropriate
- LEED™ and LEED™ products and services will only be licensed through the US Green Building Council. No third party may convey the use or license to use LEED™ and/or LEED™ products to any other.
- Create market incentives and promote the value of LEED Certification by the US Green building Council
- Development of proof sources and establish LEED/USGBC as a credible source of green education and market transformation
 - Library of Referenced Standards
 - Case Studies
 - Web Site – www.usgbc.org / www.leedbuilding.org
 - Background papers
 - Presentations
 - Technical, Financial and Market Research Reports
 - Press Articles/Features
 - Books
 - Literature surveys (especially of USGBC members)
 - Continue a highly visible awareness and marketing campaign
 - Offer training workshops, jointly sponsored regional seminars
 - Sponsor USGBC/LEED™ high-level National and International events
- Ensure a high degree of consistency in the credit structure, look and feel, stringency and comparability of certification levels across all LEED products whilst permitting sufficient adaptation to market needs and practical requirements.
- Protect the credibility and integrity of LEED by maintaining processes that protect the quality and independence of LEED assessments and provide broad consensus based support for the development of LEED products.
- Protect the credibility and integrity of LEED by maintaining the quality of USGBC workshop training and Accreditation exams.

SECTION 5

Developing LEED™ Products

All LEED™ project certification products – not including training or accreditation programs:

- Are initiated and managed by USGBC Member Committees established per the USGBC Board Committee Policy.
- Are developed using applicable guidance in the LEED™ Product Development and Maintenance Handbook.

Horizontal Market Products

Horizontal Markets are the core of the LEED portfolio of products. Development of Horizontal Market products originates with the Steering Committee or USGBC Board. They are developed by standing sub-committees of the LEED™ Steering Committee using consensus based committee processes, and are piloted and balloted with the USGBC membership before being finalized and implemented. All Horizontal products must have the same “look and feel” of the LEED™ brand. Variations must be limited to those areas unique to that Horizontal Market.

Vertical Market Products

Vertical Markets Application Guides and their supporting tools and materials are refinements of the core LEED product portfolio to address specific needs of key occupancies. Development of Vertical Market products originates with the Steering Committee, the USGBC Board or may be proposed by interested stakeholder members of the USGBC. They are developed by *ad hoc* Application Guide committees using consensus based committee processes, and may be piloted and balloted with the USGBC membership before being finalized and implemented, according to the specifics of the Application Guide. All Application Guides must have the same “look and feel” of the LEED™ brand. Variations must be limited to those areas unique to the target market.

SECTION 6

Modifying LEED™

The USGBC recognizes that LEED needs to be adaptable to meet the different needs of different markets in different locations. Equally though, it is also essential that LEED™ is consistent and universally recognizable both technically and in terms of the brand.

There are two basic types of modifications to LEED™ either in the U.S. or in other countries: Adaptations and Supplements. Entities wishing to adapt or supplement LEED for local purposes are urged to first consult the LEED™ Product Development Handbook.

Adaptations

The USGBC recognizes the importance of local conditions in promoting sustainability, and the need for LEED to be flexible to accommodate these conditions. Nonetheless, adaptation of LEED Rating systems for local use carries significant burdens and responsibilities for the adapting entity. USGBC considers it preferable and recommended that any adaptation to local conditions is done by means of a supplement to the basic LEED standard which of itself remains intact. In this way, either LEED or the supplement can be updated independently without having implications for the other.

Supplements

The USGBC will not normally evaluate or recognize modifications to LEED™ outside of the Guidelines presented above or in the LEED™ Product Development Handbook. However, if an entity wants to develop a Supplement to LEED™ that changes point weightings, add more credits or modifications outside of the flexibility mechanisms described above, it can certainly do so with the following caveats:

1. The provisions of the addendum are scored by the entity itself and the USGBC would be under no obligation to assess or certify provisions within the addendum.
2. These provisions are not compared publicly to LEED™, either favorably or unfavorably.
3. Projects submitted to LEED™ will follow only the requirements and documentation required by the approved LEED credits/prerequisites and will not entertain requests to evaluate modifications to LEED™ outside of the parameters established in this document.

LEED™ Process Guidelines

Changes & Corrections

As described below, the Council will issue periodic **changes, clarifications, interpretations, and editorial corrections**. The process will differ for each type of change to LEED™. The process shall consider the type of issue and the appropriate individual or party to address the request. The LEED™ Steering Committee is responsible for guiding the process of changing LEED™ requirements.

The formal response process for each type of change to LEED™ may include requirements for voting on the part of the responsible Committee, the USGBC Board or by the membership at large. Voting procedures will follow the principles of consensus established in the Council's bylaws. If consensus is not established at a particular level, then the Request shall be moved up to the next committee or organizational level as appropriate. In any case, (excepting legal challenge) the vote of the Council membership or the USGBC Board shall be taken as the final arbitration of an issue once all resources of appeal have been exhausted.

Changes

“Changes” are classified as modifications of point totals and/or requirements for obtaining LEED™ credit. Changes must be balloted if any of the following circumstances arise.

1. Existing criteria are found to be incorrect in an existing version and must be replaced by new criteria that are substantively different to those already existing. Simple updates to referenced standards that do not imply any change to the stringency of a standard but simply maintain LEED™ in line with current practice would not warrant ballot, for example.
2. Setting award levels that change the number of available points or proportion of points assigned to a particular issue (weighting)
3. Changes to criteria as part of normal product evolution that change the stringency of a credit (making it easier or more difficult to achieve).

Clarifications

“Clarifications” are changes to the wording in a LEED™ Credit or Prerequisite that bring actions in line with intent. Clarifications correct unclear communication, syntax or word use. Clarifications are distinct from changes in that they don't change the intent, requirement or stringency of a credit. Rather, they further define and refine the requirement. (For example, providing a definition of what is meant by “shade,” or specifying a particular chapter in a referenced document.)

Product committees are responsible for taking the lead on issuing clarifications. Clarifications will be reviewed by the Steering Committee but do not require ballot of the membership.

Editorial Corrections

Editorial corrections are the lowest level of change to LEED™ Rating Criteria. Such corrections involve non-substantive elements, such as spelling, grammar, punctuation and organization for clarity and flow.

Editorial corrections are performed by the Product and Steering Committees. They are not subject to review, approval or ballot.

Balloting and Appeals Procedures

The balloting process for LEED products is as follows:

- The LEED Steering Committee votes to approve the ballot for any LEED product or other item.
- Current members of USGBC in good standing will receive an E-mail notification of comment period on draft item. Item will be made available to members on website.
- Web-based comments will be accepted within a thirty-day comment period. One submittal per USGBC member organization will be accepted. Comments are required to reference specific paragraph or section as appropriate.
- A four- to six-week period will be allowed to collate comments and draft revisions in response to comments. Similar comments may be aggregated, along with explanations of how any differences were resolved. The LEED Steering Committee will approve drafted revisions.
- At its discretion, the SC may remand any part or the whole of the document back to the membership for an additional comment period repeating steps 2-4 as it deems necessary.
- Members will receive an email notification of web-based ballot on final item. Item will be accompanied on website by commentary (written by Product Committee) explaining the major changes.
- Thirty days will be provided for members to cast votes on the ballot with one vote allowed by the USGBC primary liaison.
- A minimum of two-thirds affirmative vote of votes cast will be required for an item to pass. A quorum will be required consistent with USGBC bylaws.
- An announcement of the ballot results will be made to the membership within two weeks. .
- If item passes, publication and implementation follows. If the item fails, it may be resubmitted for ballot at a later date.
- An item may be withdrawn by the originating body or the LEED Steering Committee at any time during the above-described process.
- If within 15 days a USGBC member disagrees strongly with a CHANGE to the balloted version that resulted from the LEED Steering Committee's approved draft, they may file an appeal to the Board, which will authorize a special ballot of that question.

- The parties involved (the Steering Committee, the original commentator and the member objecting to the change provoked by the comment) have 7 days in which to present a written case to the Board.
- The Board then has 7 days to post the issue for comment and alert the membership.
- Once posted, members have 15 days to respond. A simple majority vote of the membership decides the issue.