New on USGBC.org: Using the LEED Language Glossary

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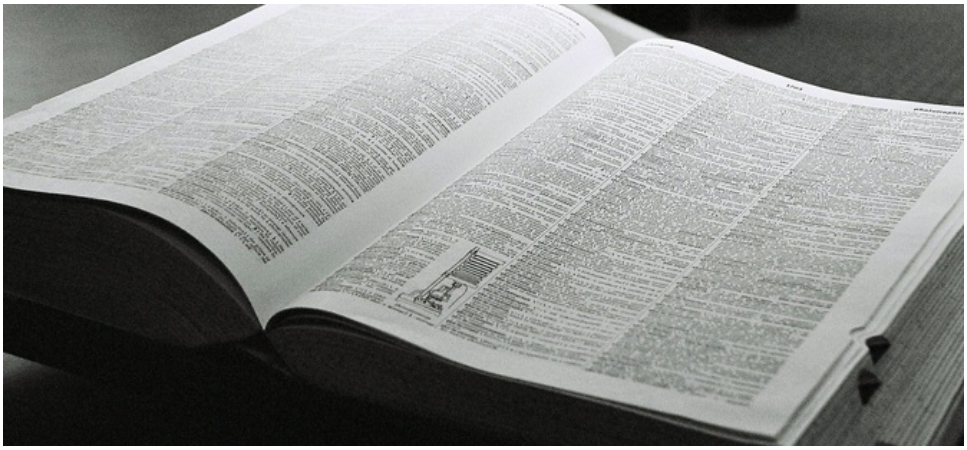

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When it comes to language in technical material like the LEED rating system, users from novice to expert may find themselves asking the question, “What exactly are they talking about?” Words you use in everyday conversation may appear in places where their contextual meaning isn’t exactly clear.

The new USGBC.org is up to the task of defining these words. Next time you’re viewing a credit in the new LEED credit library, try out the green switch in the top right labeled “Glossary.” When you turn on this option, words throughout the page are highlighted green and are clickable. These are key terms modified by LEED prerequisite and credit requirements.

When a project team reads the second prerequisite for Energy and Atmosphere (EAp2) in LEED for Existing Buildings: Operations and Maintenance, they conceptually know they must submit a full 12 months of continous measured energy data for their project. However, we can’t take for granted that everyone has the same understanding of what the “project” really is. Enter the glossary. Click the word “project” and you will find out we’re talking about “the land, water, and construction that constitutes the project application.” You also find out that even though you don’t have to own or control all the land and water, it still has to comply with prerequisites and credits.

While this is a fairly straightforward example, it can get complicated quickly. For example, some words have slight variations in meaning depending on the rating system and version they’re used in. We’ve accounted for this by showing you all the definitions side-by-side. Take a look at how the word “project” varies between LEED v4 and LEED for Homes.

We think the glossary will develop into a robust tool that provides clarity to users of LEED. While we think graywater is great for LEED projects, our stance on grey area is a little different. Take a look at this feature and use the comment section below to let us know how we can improve it.

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