

Building Materials & Resources in the LEED 2012 Draft to Focus on Life Cycle Analysis and More Transparent Product Information

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Washington, D.C. (September 13, 2011) – The U.S. Green Building Council's (USGBC) next update to the LEED green building program, coined LEED 2012, will include updates to the Materials & Resources (MR) credit category. The updates reflect thousands of write-in comments received through the first LEED public comment period and include changes to existing LEED credit categories as well as two new credit categories, Integrated Process (IP) and Performance (PF).

LEED 2012 is currently in the second public comment period until Sept. 14, 2011. Public comment periods are part of the continuous development process of the LEED program.

The Materials & Resources (MR) credit category, which addresses waste reduction while improving the environmental impact of materials selection and waste disposal, has been revised to include an increased focus on the application of Life Cycle Assessment (LCA). LCA is a powerful analytical technique used to assess environmental impacts associated with all the stages of a product's life, from extraction, manufacture, use, reuse and disposal.

"By encouraging the use of LCA in LEED we're encouraging project teams to use analytical tools that are based on information about resource flows through our environmental as well as economic systems. Our expectation is that project teams will make more informed decisions as a result" said Brendan Owens, Vice President of LEED Technical Development, USGBC. "While LCA has limitations, it does a number of things very well and it is one of the best ways conduct trade-off analysis to guide decisions about the specification of products."

In addition to LCA, USGBC has added new MR credits that encourage project teams to specify materials that have been sourced responsibly as well as products screened to assess the impacts the product might have on human health on both a local and global level.

To encourage increased transparency of information about products, a new credit rewards the use of materials for which Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs) have been made. This practice encourages product manufacturers to engage in disclosure activities that provide building product specifiers and procurement officials with consistent and complete information about their products. Increased transparency around product attributes enables more informed decisions about product specification.

"As a whole, it's critical we move toward understanding the impacts our building materials have relative to extraction, manufacturing, use and disposal over a product's lifetime. The goals we've set for LEED are achieved when we reward building designers and operators who specify the best performing products from an environmental impact standpoint" Owens concluded.

To view a video presentation on the LEED MR credit category in LEED 2012, narrated by Brendan Owens, visit <http://bit.ly/LEED2012MRvideo>.

USGBC expects that utilization of MR credits around EPDs, responsible raw material sourcing and avoidance of chemicals of concern will be beneficial to manufacturers of building materials. Additionally, LEED credits that heavily incentivize the use of building products sourced and manufactured in close proximity to the project that already comply with a variety of best practices and regulations will allow their products to stand out regionally as well as globally.

Public comment for LEED 2012 will remain open until Sept. 14, 2011. The drafts currently available for public comment feature updated language and scorecards, and include responses to comments with LEED points associated with all credits. Members of the public can comment on any changes made since the first comment period, which ran from Nov. 8, 2010 through Jan. 19, 2011. To learn more about LEED 2012 and review the proposed drafts and supporting materials, visit www.usgbc.org/LEED/development.

About U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC)

The U.S. Green Building Council is committed to a prosperous and sustainable future for our nation through cost-efficient and energy-saving green buildings. With a community comprising 79 local affiliates, nearly 16,000 member organizations, and more than 168,000 LEED Professional Credential holders, USGBC is the driving force of an industry that is projected to contribute \$554 billion to the U.S. GDP from 2009-2013. USGBC leads an unlikely diverse constituency of builders and environmentalists, corporations and nonprofit organizations, elected officials and concerned citizens, and teachers and students. For more information, visit usgbc.org and connect on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

LEED

The U.S. Green Building Council's LEED green building certification system is the foremost program for the design, construction and operation of green buildings. Over 40,000 projects are currently participating in the commercial and institutional LEED rating systems, comprising more than 8.3 billion square feet of construction space in all 50 states and 120 countries. In addition, more than 12,000 homes have been certified under the LEED for Homes rating system, with nearly 58,000 more homes registered.

By using less energy, LEED-certified buildings save money for families, businesses and taxpayers; reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and contribute to a healthier environment for residents, workers and the larger community. For more information, visit www.usgbc.org.

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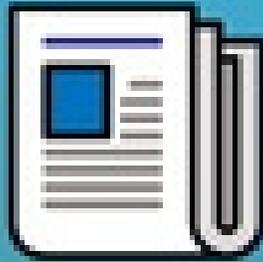
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