

Refinements in Materials & Resources

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We are in the midst of a really exciting time for LEED and USGBC. LEED v4 will be balloted in June of this year and in the time we have leading up to that point, USGBC is taking every moment to make sure the system is fully usable and the program has been thoroughly tested.

The last step in the development process is **one final public comment period, open March 1 – March 31, 2013**. This period will focus on refinement (both in the credit language and in calculations) and provides the public with one last chance to give feedback on the system before the member vote in June.

During the last public comment period for LEED v4, a set of significant improvements was introduced to the way LEED encourages the selection of products and materials in buildings. The reworked Materials & Resources section encouraged life cycle thinking at both the whole building and product levels and then reinforced this shift by introducing LEED credits that rewarded transparency and product optimization. This would encourage LEED project teams to seek out (and product manufacturers to provide) a more complete picture of the environmental and health impacts of materials and products.

From the feedback USGBC received, the message from our stakeholders is clear – you overwhelmingly support this shift and have in fact challenged us to think even bigger.

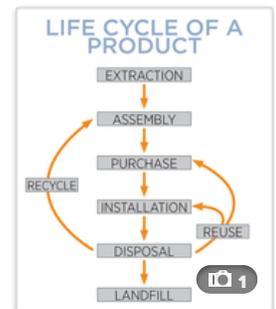
In the last public comment period, the language for the Building Product Disclosure and Optimization—Material Ingredients LEED credit was largely focused on the *end* of the supply chain, rewarding project teams for working with product manufacturers that report on the ingredients in their products and/or those that optimize the ingredients in their products. Manufacturers of finished goods are often limited in what is available on the market and what information is available from upstream suppliers. For example, a chair manufacturer may purchase fabric for cushions that contains dyes and cotton or polyester added at least three steps earlier in the supply chain. So the question was posed, how can LEED influence the supply chain further upstream – and in doing so, affect an even greater transformation of the building products market?

Enter option 3 of the [Building Product Disclosure and Optimization—Material Ingredients](#) LEED credit. In the newest draft of the LEED v4 rating system (open for public comment March 1 – March 31, 2013), options 1 and 2 - as proposed for fifth public comment - remain intact, but a new option has been added to acknowledge supply chain optimization programs. These programs will be third party verified and provide relevant information on environmental and health impacts to decision-makers throughout the manufacturing process. With this option, LEED can directly reward activity throughout the supply chain.

For **LEED project teams**, option 3 provides an additional way for projects to connect with manufacturers. It rewards projects that select products developed by manufacturers that source from raw materials suppliers engaged in third-party verified supply chain optimization programs.

For the **suppliers of raw materials**, option 3 provides a way to distinguish their products by including health- and safety-based optimization programs in their operations. This option additionally rewards **building product manufacturers** that engage leading raw material and component suppliers in optimization of the upstream supply and the downstream product.

LEED v4 is taking steps to reach beyond the direct footprint of a LEED project and recognize interconnection of different systems that define our built environment. This is just one important example of how we ensure that LEED certified buildings do just that.



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