LEED™ FOR EXISTING BUILDINGS INVITES PARTICIPATION IN PILOT

WASHINGTON, D.C. – January 29, 2002 – Today, the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) launched the pilot phase of its newest green building rating system: LEED™ for Existing Buildings (LEED™ EB). The official invitation to participate in the pilot program of the newly developed LEED for Existing Buildings was sent to more than 2,000 U.S. Green Building Council members and affiliated organizations. The USGBC is seeking to identify 50 projects that will shape LEED-EB by putting the newest green building rating system to the test.

The new product builds on the enormous success of LEED 2.0 which was launched in 2000 to certify the overall environmental performance of new commercial buildings. “The challenge has been to adapt LEED 2.0 for the nearly 250,000 major building-improvement projects that are undertaken every year on existing buildings,” states Christine Ervin, President and CEO of the USGBC. “Given the magnitude of potential economic and environmental benefits, we’re eager to get LEED-EB product tested and into the marketplace.

Using the blueprint established in LEED 2.0, LEED-EB evaluates “greenness” in five categories: Sustainable Sites, Water Efficiency, Energy and Atmosphere, Materials and Resources, and Indoor Environmental Quality. Where this new LEED rating system differs is in its provisions for green standards as they relate to operating, maintaining or converting existing buildings into high performance, sustainable facilities.

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While LEED 2.0 applies to new construction or to major renovations that gut a building back to its shell, the LEED-EB rating system applies to existing building operations and system
improvements. Michael Arny, co-chair of the LEED for Existing Buildings Committee for the USGBC, adds, “It was important that the USGBC’s first rating system should address new building design and construction, because you only get one chance to build a new building right. But with more than 4.5 million buildings in the U.S., the operation of existing buildings has a much larger impact on the environment. LEED-EB provides existing building owners and operators with a tool kit for systematically reducing the environmental impacts of their buildings and for maintaining these reductions day after day, year after year.”

LEED-EB addresses cleaning and maintenance practices, indoor air quality, energy and water performance, and ongoing monitoring, measurement and management of all building systems. It also offers standards for enhancing programs and supporting facilities for occupant recycling.

As with LEED 2.0, LEED™ for Existing Buildings offers four levels of recognition. Buildings that achieve 40% of the 71 points available are awarded a LEED™ Certified plaque. LEED™ Certified Silver requires 50%, Certified Gold requires 60%, and Certified Platinum requires 80%. Five bonus points recognizing design and process innovation are also available to projects attempting certification. No matter what level of certification a building receives, LEED™ standards will significantly reduce the building’s impact on the environment.

“Before the final version of LEED-EB can be released to the marketplace, the USGBC must evaluate the criteria it has established against actual results of the pilot,” explains Paul von Paumgartten, co-chair of the LEED for Existing Buildings Committee. “That’s why the pilot program is so crucial to the success of LEED-EB. The projects selected for this pilot program will provide a representative sample of the broad range of facilities that will seek LEED certification when LEED-EB is officially launched. For this important phase of the development process, building size, use, location, as well as occupancy type and industry sector will all be reviewed to assemble the final group of pilot projects.”

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At the completion of the pilot program, the data collected from the projects will help the USGBC fill unforeseen gaps and make any necessary adjustments to the requirements, strategies
and suggested technologies. This, in turn, may greatly affect the final rating criteria presented to the USGBC membership for approval in an official balloting process.

“The objective of pilot testing LEED-EB,” notes Steven Winter, chair of the USGBC’s Board of Directors and president of Steven Winter Associates, Inc., “is not only to make certain that this rating system is practical and workable in real buildings. It will also be an important tool for the market transformation to green operating practices in existing buildings and will further broaden the USGBC’s definition of what a green building is.”

After gaining approval by the USGBC membership, LEED-EB will provide guidelines as well as recognition for greening building operations. This will give all existing building owners, facility operators, designers and contractors involved in operation, maintenance, upgrades and operational improvements the opportunity to participate in the LEED success story.

The pilot documents, including the LEED-EB rating system, are available on the USGBC website at: www.usgbc.org. The web site offers on-line rulings in applying LEED standards. Also, technical support services and expertise is available to those in the certification program.

The USGBC is a nonprofit, consensus-based coalition representing the entire building industry. For more information on LEED and the U.S. Green Building Council, visit www.usgbc.org.

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