



1800 Massachusetts Ave,
NW, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20036
T: 202 828-7422
F: 202 828-5110
www.usgbc.org

Introduction and Executive Summary: Recognition of Certified Wood Products in LEED Green Building Rating Systems

Overview

The following proposed certified wood credit language is open for public comment until September 7, 2008. You are being asked to comment on (1) the proposed revisions to the credit's intent and requirements and (2) the criteria proposed in the USGBC Forest Certification System Benchmark.

If the revisions are approved via Member Ballot and if a subsequent USGBC evaluation verifies that a forest certification system meets the Benchmark's requirements, that system's supply of certified wood will count towards the achievement of credits that reward the use of certified wood.

Building project teams will not be required to determine if a particular forest certification system meets the Benchmark's requirements. The process by which this evaluation will occur is being developed and will be enacted only if USGBC members approve the proposed credit revisions.

The revised credit language incorporates the slight modification already proposed in the LEED 2009 changes (the parenthetical insertion of "based on cost" in the first sentence of MRc7 in LEED-NC, LEED-CI, and LEED for Schools and of MRc6 in LEED-CS). The approved revised credit becomes the basis of credits dealing with wood certification for all projects registered post-credit ratification. The credit will also be available as an alternative compliance path for all pre-LEED 2009 rating systems that include explicit reference to the Forest Stewardship Council (LEED for New Construction and Major Renovation v2.2, LEED for Schools 2008, LEED for Commercial Interiors v2.0, LEED for Existing Buildings v2.0, and LEED and Core and Shell v2.0).

Summary of Proposed Credit Language Revisions

The focus of the proposed LEED credit language revisions is on transparency, setting forth a clear set of metrics that any forest certification system must meet in order to be recognized within LEED. Currently, only wood products certified by the Forest Stewardship Council are eligible for LEED points.

Under the newly proposed credit language, wood certification systems would be evaluated for eligibility to earn points towards LEED certification against a measurable benchmark that includes:

- Governance
- Technical/Standards Substance
- Accreditation and Auditing
- Chain of Custody and Labeling

If approved by USGBC membership, wood certified under programs deemed compliant after thorough, objective analysis would be recognized by LEED and could earn

August 8, 2008



1800 Massachusetts Ave,
NW, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20036
T: 202 828-7422
F: 202 828-5110
www.usgbc.org

a project points towards LEED certification. If a program is deemed non-compliant, the certification program administrators would have a clear understanding of what modifications are necessary to receive recognition under LEED.

Documents for public review and comment clearly set forth the proposed benchmark with great detail in order to facilitate a robust dialogue.

Scope of Proposed Credit Language Revisions

Consistent with the Board of Directors' direction and the LEED Steering Committee's charge to the Materials and Resources Technical Advisory Group (MR TAG), seven individual credits in existing LEED Rating Systems would be updated. Affected credits include:

- LEED 2009, New Construction, Materials and Resources Credit 7, Certified Wood
- LEED 2009, Schools, Materials and Resources Credit 7, Certified Wood
- LEED 2009, Commercial Interiors, Materials and Resources Credit 7, Certified Wood
- LEED 2009, Core and Shell, Materials and Resources Credit 6, Certified Wood
- LEED 2009, Existing Buildings: Operations and Maintenance, Materials and Resources Credit 1.1–1.3: Sustainable Purchasing: Ongoing Consumables
- LEED 2009, Existing Buildings: Operations and Maintenance, Materials and Resources Credit 3: Sustainable Purchasing: Facility Alterations and Additions
- LEED for Homes, Materials and Resources 2, Environmentally Preferable Materials

Background

The first version of LEED's certified wood credit was introduced into the rating system as a part of the v2.0 release in 2001 and has not evolved significantly since that time.

During the development process supporting the v2.1 update to the LEED Green Building Rating System for New Construction, the MR TAG introduced a proposal for revised credit language for certified wood in LEED. Based on the overwhelming response during the public comment period and the constraints of the development timetable for LEED v2.1, the proposed revisions were set aside.

Over this same five-year period, based in part on the international leadership set forth by the Forest Stewardship Council, significant changes occurred in the forest products certification sector that merited review.

Recognizing this fact, in 2006 the USGBC's Board of Directors commissioned a white paper on forest products certification and LEED in order to devote the necessary time and focus to study of the issue. USGBC has taken the following actions since that time:

- May 2006: USGBC's Board charged the LEED Steering Committee (LSC) to review the wood certification credit in LEED and to develop revised credit lan-

August 8, 2008



1800 Massachusetts Ave,
NW, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20036
T: 202 828-7422
F: 202 828-5110
www.usgbc.org

guage, if warranted. The Board further specified that any credit language revisions would require a USGBC member ballot, in accordance with USGBC's published consensus processes.

- June 2006: LSC charged the MR TAG to study the technical and scientific basis for the wood certification credit and, if warranted, develop revised credit language with a clear supporting rationale for any revisions.
- July 2006: The MR TAG began a process of stakeholder engagement in support of the consensus process.
- January 2007: USGBC engaged the Yale Program on Forest Policy and Governance (YPPFG) and Life Cycle Assessment experts at Sylvatica to support the MR TAG in its research and development.
- March 2007: YPPFG undertook a multi-step stakeholder outreach effort over a six-month period to develop a thorough, peer-reviewed analysis of existing forest certification programs.
- September 2007: YPPFG delivers initial set of policy making and analysis tools for MR TAG (YPPFG's final guidance document "Assessing USGBC's Policy Options for Forest Certification and the Use of Wood and other Bio-based Materials," can be downloaded at <http://www.yale.edu/forestcertification/USGBCFinal.htm>.)
- October 2007: The MR TAG began the evaluation of the existing forest products certification programs.
- July 2008: The MR TAG completed its analysis and proposed the USGBC Forest Certification System Benchmark and updated existing LEED credit language referring to the proposed certification benchmarks.
- August 2008: First Public Comment Draft released for public comment and review.

Next Steps

Consistent with USGBC's consensus process for the development of the LEED Green Building Rating System, the MR TAG will review and respond to all comments after the 30-day public comment period. Appropriate revisions to the proposed credit language will be made, and a second public comment period will follow. If public comments lead to further revisions to the proposed credit language revisions, subsequent public comment periods will follow as necessary.

Upon the conclusion of the final public comment period, the final proposed credit language revisions will be released for Member Ballot and ratification.

August 8, 2008