

## **GREEN BUILDING, USGBC AND LEED**

### **February 2008**



The U.S. Green Building Council is the nation's foremost coalition of leaders from across the building industry working to promote buildings that are environmentally responsible, profitable and healthy places to live and work. Green buildings increase productivity, improve health, conserve the Earth's resources, and cost less to operate and maintain. They are becoming highly-prized assets for companies, communities and people across the country.

USGBC is the acknowledged leader in green building and development. USGBC's LEED® (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Green Building Rating System™ has provided the reliable building design and performance measurement systems that building owners and operators need. Founded in 1993, USGBC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The organization is governed by a 32-member Board of Directors elected by the full USGBC membership. USGBC is a dues-based membership organization representing more than 13,750 organizations from 12 membership categories.

A staff of more than 100 professionals administers an extensive program of education, information and advocacy that is anchored by the LEED Green Building Rating System. LEED is a voluntary standards and certification program that defines high-performance green buildings and encompasses all building types including New Construction, Existing Buildings, Commercial Interiors, Core & Shell, Homes, Neighborhoods and Healthcare. USGBC's LEED accreditation, education workshops, chapter programs in more than 70 communities, and the annual Greenbuild conference provide a strong foundation for green building education.

LEED provides a complete framework for meeting sustainability goals and assessing building performance in six categories: Sustainable Sites; Water Efficiency; Energy and Atmosphere; Materials and Resources; Indoor Environmental Quality; Innovation and Design Process. Four progressive levels of LEED certification – Certified, Silver, Gold and Platinum – can be achieved based on the number of points awarded to a building project. Certain prerequisites must be achieved in order to qualify for certification.

With more than 1,200 certified projects and over 9,500 registered projects, USGBC has extensive experience in assessing, documenting and administering what has become the leading green building rating system in the United States. Consensus-based and scientifically driven, LEED provides well-defined processes for incorporating constantly evolving practices and technologies.

A current example of LEED's constant evolution is the process by which USGBC is addressing wood and wood certification issues. The Council convened a meeting of forest industry stakeholders in September 2005 to solicit their perspectives on wood and wood certification in the context of the LEED. Subsequently, USGBC's Board of Directors directed the LEED Steering Committee (LSC) to address bio-based materials (including wood) within LEED via USGBC's fair, open and transparent consensus process. The LSC in turn directed the Materials and Resources Technical Advisory Group (MR-TAG) to review and provide recommendations and a rationale for how to improve the intent and technical content of the bio-based credits in the LEED system.

As a third-party certification system, LEED validates achievement and establishes leadership in the green building sector. LEED provides a clear roadmap for sustainable design and then ensures its performance by documenting that the building is constructed as designed.

As the following statistics make abundantly clear, LEED stands alone as the pre-eminent green building rating system in the United States:

**\$12 billion:** The annual market for green building in products and services

**Nearly 4 billion:** Square feet of commercial building space registered or certified under the LEED® Green Building Rating System™

**70,000+:** Professionals trained through LEED workshops

**43,000+:** LEED Accredited Professionals

**13,746:** USGBC member organizations, including corporations, governmental agencies, and nonprofits

**1,283:** Total commercial LEED-certified projects

**9,867:** Total commercial LEED-registered projects

**6,223:** Building projects are LEED for New Construction registered and an additional 952 building projects have completed LEED-NC certification

**944:** Building projects have registered with LEED for Commercial Interiors and an additional 204 have completed certification

**925:** Building projects have registered with LEED for Existing Buildings and an additional 67 have completed certification

**1,271:** Building projects have registered with LEED for Core and Shell and an additional 55 have completed certification

**11390:** Residential units have registered with LEED for Homes and an additional 490 have completed certification

**25:** Percent of LEED certified projects owned by federal, state, and local governments

International:

**64:** Countries with LEED projects

States:

**50:** States with LEED projects

**26:** States have adopted LEED

Local:

**110+:** Local Governments have adopted LEED

**90:** Percent reduction in employee relocation costs in buildings with flexible design features

**40:** Percent increase in sales in stores with skylights

*(from a study for the California Board for Energy Efficiency Third Party Program)*

**30:** Percent cut in energy use can save tenants 50 cents per square foot per year *(according to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency research)*

**20:** Percent savings in O&M costs for LEED buildings over their life

*(from The Costs and Financial Benefits of Green Buildings: A Report to California's Sustainable Building Task Force)*

**7:** Percent increase in employee productivity in buildings with increased lighting control *(from a Carnegie Mellon University study)*