

**U.S. General Services Administration (GSA)  
Office of Federal High-Performance Green Buildings**

**Discussion Preparation for Green Building Advisory Committee Meeting  
May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2012**

**Topic:**

**Green Building Certification System Review**

**Background:**

**Section 436(h) of the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (EISA: Public Law 110-140—DEC. 19, 2007)** requires GSA's Office of Federal High-Performance Green Buildings to evaluate green building certification systems every five years to identify a system and certification level "*deem(ed) to be most likely to encourage a comprehensive and environmentally sound approach to certification of green buildings*". EISA directs the Federal Director to provide the findings to the Secretary of Energy who, in consultation with the Department of Defense (DOD) and GSA, formally identifies the system(s) to be used across the Federal government.

**Review Process:**

- Initial screening of certification systems conducted in 2011.
- In-depth evaluation and report: Report to be released in May 2012.
- *EISA§436(h) Ad Hoc Review Group*: Convene EISA Ad-Hoc Review Group (Senior Leaders of Department of Energy (DOE), DOD, and GSA co-chairing). Additionally, GSA, DOE (Federal Energy Management Program) and DOD (Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Installations and Environment) have determined that discussion among Federal agencies would be helpful to evaluate and make recommendations on the role of green building certification systems in advancing high performance in the Federal real estate portfolio. Co-chairs had their first conference call in early March 2012. The kickoff meeting for the EISA 436 Ad Hoc Review Group is scheduled for May 17<sup>th</sup> in Washington D.C.
- Concurrent public and Federal sector review & input: May through July 2012.
- Posting in Federal Register (public notice of findings, not a rulemaking): late summer.
- Findings submitted to Secretary of Energy: Fall 2012

Note: There is substantial interest in this effort within the private sector and Congress; a series of concurrent public outreach "listening sessions" are planned to share report findings with interested stakeholders and obtain their feedback.

**Current Status:**

In 2011 GSA began the second GBCS review process and conducted initial screening of some 180 building sustainability certification systems, standards, and guidelines. Three systems passed the initial screening, which focused on the following EISA criteria:

- be available in the U.S. market,
- have third party certification, and
- employ whole building evaluation, addressing key sustainable design and operations metrics.

The three systems that passed the initial criteria are: Green Building Initiative's Green Globes® (2010), U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Environmental and Energy Design (LEED®) (2009), and the International Living Building Institute's Living Building Challenge™ (2011).

These three certification systems have undergone an in-depth evaluation which is documented in the GBCS Review Report. Review criteria in the report include a detailed comparison to EISA requirements, the Guiding Principles, and the Federal sector high performance green buildings requirements.

**KEY QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

1. What is the role of green building certification systems in the Federal portfolio?
2. What is/should be the role of 3<sup>rd</sup> party verification?
3. How can the Federal sector best use certification systems for existing buildings, with or without renovation?