

LEED MR7 – FSC Credit Made Easy: *Strategies to Specify and Source FSC for USGBC LEED Standards*

FOR COMMERCIAL CONSTRUCTION, LEED-NC AND LEED-CI Materials & Resources credit 7 (MR 7) requires that at least 50% (measured by cost) of the wood building components permanently installed in a LEED-registered project be Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified in order to earn one point toward LEED certification. This includes, but is not limited to, structural framing and general dimensional framing, flooring, millwork, finishes, furnishings, and not-rented temporary construction applications such as bracing, concrete form work and pedestrian barriers. The intent of this credit is to encourage environmentally responsible forest management.

Regional wood products — those products extracted, processed and manufactured within 500 miles of the construction site — count toward two additional points. MR 5.1 awards a point if more than 10% of all materials permanently installed (excluding mechanical, electrical and plumbing components and specialty items like elevators and equipment) meet the regional criteria. MR 5.2 provides an additional point if another 10% or more of permanently

installed materials documented in fulfilling MR 5 meet the regional criteria (within 500 miles). The intent of these credits is to increase demand for building materials and products that are extracted and manufactured within the region, thereby supporting the use of indigenous resources and reducing environmental impacts resulting from transportation.



Goldman Sachs' *Designing & Building with FSC* award-winning building in Jersey City, NJ earned LEED Certified status and used 100% FSC certified wood in its interior construction.



The Penn State School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture building used a Doors & Floors approach to USGBC's MR 7 credit and anticipates a LEED-Gold rating.

Wood building products certified by the Forest Stewardship Council are one of the best opportunities to minimize the environmental impact of construction projects. These credible, third-party-verified products increase the measurable and visible sustainability of any building. A clear strategy and some up-to-date resources can help successfully navigate the more than 4,000 FSC certified manufacturers and distributors delivering wood-based products from more than 170 million acres of FSC certified forests around the world. USGBC's LEED standards, one of the primary drivers of sustainable construction in the United States, recognize the value of FSC certified wood products to reducing the impact of the construction industry on the environment.

Critical Actions for Achieving MR 7 LEED Credit

- **Start Early:** FSC certified wood components are not always in stock; some must be custom ordered.
- **Verify Vendors:** Vendors must be FSC Chain-of-Custody (CoC) certified
- **Specify FSC:** Bid packages and specifications should call out all required FSC wood on a line-item basis.
- **Review all purchase orders, receipts, and invoices of FSC wood** for each vendor's CoC number.
- **Select strategy(s) to reach 50%** minimum FSC certified wood by \$ cost.
- **Target above 50%** (60% to 70% total FSC cost) to allow for possible shortfalls in FSC wood availability.
- **Review costs of all wood available** to ensure FSC is at least 50% of the total.
- **Go to www.rainforest-alliance.org/greenbuilding:** refer to the *SmartGuide to Green Building Wood Sources* and *Designing & Building with FSC* for more detailed specification and sourcing information.

Strategies to Effectively Source FSC-Certified Products for LEED

LEED for commercial construction projects (LEED-NC and -CI) measures the amount of wood products used by cost. To minimize effort, it makes sense to source higher cost FSC-certified products first to reach the 50% mark faster. In commercial/institutional construction, appearance products, such as doors, floors and millwork, normally account for most of the wood products expenditures. By sourcing FSC-certified higher cost items, it is possible to maximize LEED points while reducing the effort needed to source FSC-certified wood.

Millwork Strategy

Virtually all LEED NC and CI projects include custom wood millwork. Because of the expense of the architectural grades of wood and extensive fabrication involved, this often is the highest cost wood factor for achieving the MR 7 credit. Target ALL MILLWORK to be FSC certified, and work closely with vendors to achieve this goal.

Doors & Floors Strategy

Second to millwork costs, hardwood floors and wood doors tend to be high cost items and are readily available as FSC

certified. Building projects such as schools and community centers (which often require hardwood athletic floors), offices, high-rise residences, and mixed-use projects often feature extensive hardwood flooring and a greater-than-average number of doors. LEED requirements are more readily met by specifying 100% FSC certified hardwood flooring and wood doors.

Softwood Framing Strategy

For wood frame projects, FSC certified softwood framing lumber and plywood are a good starting point, both because of the large percentage of wood building products used in these structures and the increasing availability of these materials nationwide. Local sources are not always readily available, so research local and regional building materials sources as early as possible.

Regional Materials Strategy

Regional or local sourcing contributes up to 2 points for LEED commercial projects to minimize the pollution associated with shipping materials long distances, and to promote local business development. To earn these credits, determine which local or regional certification holders are located near your project and what products they can supply or procure. For LEED projects, "regional" includes everything within a 500 mile radius-which often encompasses several states. LEED also requires that products be extracted, manufactured and produced within 500 miles.

Vendor Sourcing and Documentation Help

To receive LEED credit where credit is due, make sure your certified wood products are FSC certified wood products. There are other certification systems out there, but they are not recognized by USGBC for LEED credit. To verify that a vendor is FSC certified, ask for their FSC Chain of Custody tracking number. Your invoice will denote FSC certified products on a line-item basis with the vendor's CoC number.



www.rainforest-alliance.org

The mission of the Rainforest Alliance is to protect ecosystems and the people and wildlife that depend on them by transforming land-use practices, business practices and consumer behavior. Companies, cooperatives and landowners that participate in our programs meet rigorous standards that conserve biodiversity and provide sustainable livelihoods.

Rainforest Alliance

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