

Frequently Asked Questions

LEED®

Q1: How do buildings impact the environment?

A1: Buildings have a profound impact on our natural environment, economy, health and productivity. In the United States, buildings account for:

- + 36% of total energy use
- + 65% of electricity consumption
- + 30% of greenhouse gas emissions
- + 30% of raw materials use
- + 30% of waste output/136 million tons annually
- + 12% of potable water consumption

Q2: What are the advantages of green buildings?

A2: As compared to conventional buildings, green buildings use 20-50% less energy and reduce carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions by up to 40%. In addition, they improve the health of their employees, cost less to maintain, enhance building and organizational marketability, potentially increase occupant productivity and contribute to a sustainable community.

Q3: What is the business case for high-performance green buildings?

A3: The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) states:

- + Companies can recover higher initial costs, if any exist, through life-cycle efficiencies, energy and water reduction, and other savings.
- + Green buildings can be designed so as to maximize their cost-effectiveness.
- + Green technologies boost employee productivity.
- + They also enhance health, comfort and well-being within the workplace, which may result in lower absenteeism and health-care costs.
- + Clean and healthy buildings may reduce legal claims and liabilities for building owners and operators.
- + High-performance green features translate into high value for a building's tenants.

+ Similarly, they increase property values, thanks to easier maintenance, higher occupancy rates, and greater market value.

- + Going green may allow companies to take advantage of various state and local incentive programs.
- + Communities value companies that follow environmentally friendly practices.
- + Thanks to life-cycle efficiencies and other benefits, going green can help companies achieve more predictable results.

Q4: How does LEED fit into this market?

A4: LEED provides rating systems that are voluntary, consensus-based, market-driven and based on accepted energy and environmental principles. They strike a balance between established practices and emerging concepts.

Q5: What does LEED stand for?

A5: Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design

Q6: What is LEED?

A6: Developed and administered by the USGBC, LEED is the accepted benchmark in North America for the design, construction and operation of high performance green buildings. LEED gives building owners and operators the tools they need to have an immediate and measurable impact on their buildings' performance. LEED promotes a whole-building approach to sustainability by recognizing performance in five key areas of human and environmental health:

- + Sustainable site development
- + Water savings
- + Energy efficiency
- + Materials selection
- + Indoor environmental quality

Q9: Why Certify?

A9: Benefits include:

- + Recognition for your commitment to environmental issues in your community, organization (including stockholders) and/or industry.
- + Third-party validation of environmental sustainability.
- + Qualification for a growing number of state and local government initiatives.
- + Marketing exposure through the USGBC website, Greenbuild conference, case studies and media announcements.

Q10: What LEED Programs are available?

A10: The LEED rating system offers a roadmap for every building type. The following rating systems are in place or currently in pilot program.

- + LEED-NCv2.2 for New Construction
- + LEED-EBv2.0 for Existing Buildings
- + LEED-CIv2.0 for Commercial Interiors
- + LEED-CSv2.0 for Core and Shell
- + LEED for Homes
- + LEED for Schools
- + LEED for Neighborhood Development (Pilot)
- + LEED for Retail (Pilot)
- + LEED for Healthcare (Pilot)

Q11: What are the four levels of LEED certification?

A11: LEED is a performance-oriented system where credits are earned for satisfying each criterion. Different levels of green building are awarded based on the total credits earned. The progressive levels are:

- + Certified, Silver, Gold, Platinum

Q12: What are the LEED Environmental Categories?

A12: Design and construction practices are broken down into five environmental categories and one innovation and design process:

- + Sustainable Sites
- + Water Efficiency
- + Energy & Efficiency

- + Materials & Resources
- + Indoor Environmental Air Quality
- + Innovation & Design

Q13: Is Knoll aligned with USGBC?

A13: Yes, Knoll is a member of the USGBC and can help companies, healthcare organizations, government agencies and educational institutions achieve LEED certification. Knoll actively promotes third-party certification because it provides the most impartial and trustworthy foundation for industry-wide environmental compliance. Knoll has experience working on numerous LEED projects across the country, including some of our own facilities.

Q14: Can Knoll furniture contribute to LEED Credits?

A14: Yes, there are numerous credits to which furniture can contribute. On most credits, furniture contributes to overall building materials or the LEED strategy. It is important that

Knoll representatives are a part of the LEED team early on in the process. Knoll understands the various LEED programs and submits the required documentation to obtain credits:

- + Knoll supports environmental initiatives on a local level with a LEED AP.
- + We will work with the LEED team to provide necessary certificates, calculations and supporting materials.

Q15: Can SMaRT products contribute to LEED credits?

A15: Yes, SMaRT products can contribute to an Innovation and Design credit for various programs.

Q16: Where can I find a list of Knoll customers who have achieved LEED certification or are registered for LEED certification?

A16: You will find a list on Knoll Exchange, on the A&D Manager page.

Q17: Where can I find more information on LEED?

A17: Visit www.USGBC.org for a wealth of information. You can also search for companies who have achieved LEED certification or who are registered for LEED certification. Search by state for your particular area.