

## UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA STUDY COMPARES GREEN BUILDING RATING SYSTEMS

A team of independent researchers at the University of Minnesota led by Associate Professor Timothy M. Smith recently published the results of a three month intensive analysis of the two most prominent commercial building environmental assessment and rating systems in the United States, the Green Building Initiative's (GBI) Green Globes™ system and the U.S. Green Building Council's (USGBC) LEED® system.

The report, "Green Building Systems: A Comparison of the LEED and Green Globes Systems in the US," can be found by on the GBI website ([http://www.thegbi.org/gbi/Green\\_Building\\_Rating\\_UofM.pdf](http://www.thegbi.org/gbi/Green_Building_Rating_UofM.pdf)). The study provides a detailed comparison of how the systems operate as well as their respective strengths and weaknesses.

The study stated that "in total the systems are quite similar," and that "both include a common set of potentially impactful design elements that contribute to the improvement of a building's green performance."

It also found that nearly 80 percent of the categories available for points in Green Globes are also addressed in LEED 2.2 and that over 85 percent of the categories specified in LEED 2.2 are addressed in Green Globes.

The study concluded that, while comparing the two systems is extremely difficult, there are a number of trends "worth noting." Included in this summary were the following three points:

- That Green Globes "appears to be doing a fairly good job in improving upon the delivery mechanisms employed by LEED which are so often criticized," by providing an online approach to assessment that improves efficiency and reduces costs;
- That Green Globes better integrates life-cycle thinking into its rating system;
- And that the GBI, as an accredited standards developer under the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) "will undoubtedly enhance Green Globes presence in the marketplace" by undergoing the consensus-based process associated with creating an official ANSI standard for green building practices.

**The study did reveal some "moderate dissimilarity" in point allocation in the two systems, citing that "Green Globes emphasizes Energy Use above all other categories. In contrast, LEED allocates comparatively more points to the Materials section." It reported that areas such as indoor environmental quality, resources, and site ecology are similarly emphasized by both systems, and that Green Globes employs a rating criterion that reflects life-cycle thinking and covers the entire life-cycle of building materials.**

It also stated that, "From a process perspective, Green Globes' simpler methodology, employing a user-friendly interactive guide for assessing and integrating green design principles for buildings, continues to be a point of differentiation to LEED's more complex, and largely paper-based system. While LEED has recently introduced an online-based system, it remains more extensive and requires expert knowledge in various areas. Green Globes' web-based self-assessment tool can be completed by any team member with general knowledge of the building's parameters." The researchers added that, "In contrast, LEED tends to be more rigid, time-intensive, and expensive to administer." To view an analysis of the process comparison, please visit <http://www.thegbi.org/gbi/pdf/ProcessComparison.pdf>.

For more information on the Green Globes system and the opportunity to try the system for free for 30 days, please visit <http://www.thegbi.org/greenglobes/promocodes.asp>.



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