

FAQ: Registering a project with the CaGBC or the USGBC

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Can Canadians choose to use LEED rating systems developed by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC)?

How do Canadian projects register for LEED v4?

What are the considerations when choosing between a USGBC and CaGBC rating system?

Will the CaGBC implement a LEED Volume program for LEED v2009?

Will the CaGBC release a version of LEED for Neighborhood Development (ND) 2009?

I have heard of some mid-rise home projects that are registering with the USGBC. Is this allowed?

Can Canadians choose to use LEED rating systems developed by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC)?

Under LEED version 4:

The same set of LEED v4 rating systems are used worldwide, with Alternative Compliance Paths to facilitate application of the rating systems in different regions of the world. Canadian projects are able to make use of the [Canadian Alternative Compliance Paths \(ACPs\)](#).

Under LEED version 2009:

Canadian projects can register to use a v2009 USGBC rating system when there is no equivalent LEED Canada rating system. Specifically, Canadian projects may register under the USGBC's *LEED for Retail (NC)*, *LEED for Retail (CI)*, *LEED for Healthcare* or *LEED for Schools* rating systems, as there is no equivalent LEED Canada rating system available. Many projects eligible to register for one of the above rating systems still choose to register under a LEED Canada rating system; please see [What are the considerations when choosing between a USGBC and CaGBC rating system?](#) Registration for the USGBC's LEED v2009 rating systems closes October 31, 2016.

Canadian projects cannot register to use a v2009 USGBC rating system when an equivalent CaGBC rating system is available. More specifically, projects wishing to certify under the following rating systems must register and certify using the LEED Canada version:

- *LEED for New Construction and Major Renovations (NC) 2009*
- *LEED for Core & Shell Development (CS) 2009*
- *LEED for Commercial Interiors (CI) 1.0*
- *LEED for Existing Buildings: Operations & Maintenance (EB:O&M) 2009*
- *LEED for Homes 2009*

The CaGBC has adapted the above rating systems in order to better address the needs of Canadian project teams. The Canadian adaptations are tailored specifically for Canadian climates, construction practices, standards, programs and regulations. LEED Canada rating systems are



available in both English and French, and the certification process is fully supported in both official languages. The CaGBC adapted the above rating systems as they have the widest applicability.

How do Canadian projects register for LEED v4?

Registration for LEED v4 is completed on the CaGBC's web site. Details are available at www.cagbc.org/leedv4.

What are the considerations when choosing between a USGBC and CaGBC rating system?

Projects eligible to register under the USGBC's *LEED for Retail (NC)*, *LEED for Retail (CI)*, *LEED for Healthcare* or *LEED for Schools* rating systems often choose to register their project under a LEED Canada rating system. *LEED Canada NC 2009* and *LEED Canada CS 2009* include interpretations for specific building types such as schools, and the database of Credit Interpretation Requests (CIRs) continues to grow and provide additional guidance for projects.

LEED Canada rating systems are tailored to the Canadian market and are overall much easier to use for Canadian projects than the USGBC rating systems. When the CaGBC adapts a USGBC rating system, Canadian standards, regulations and programmes are referenced; imperial measurements are converted to metric; and in some cases, requirements are adapted or changed to better serve our climate and/or regional context. It is recognized that users of the LEED Canada rating systems have become very knowledgeable in these systems, have developed specific areas of LEED Canada expertise and have acquired a great deal of experience in using LEED Canada reference guides, CIRs, applications guides, etc.

Some of the advantages and disadvantages of registering a retail, healthcare or school project under the USGBC's *LEED for Retail*, *LEED for Healthcare* or *LEED for Schools* rating systems are presented below.

Advantages:

- Rating systems were developed specifically for retail, healthcare and school facilities - the credit structures and point weightings are better suited for these building types. Note that this is less of a concern for school projects due to the strong alignment between *LEED for Schools* and *LEED Canada NC 2009*, and the incorporation of elements of the former within the latter.

Disadvantages:

- Rating systems do not reference Canadian programmes, standards or regulations.
- Rating systems do not provide metric equivalencies.
- Rating systems and certification support are only available in English.
- LEED consultants and other project team members are more familiar with the LEED Canada rating systems. It may take some time for them to familiarize themselves with the requirements of the USGBC rating systems.

Will the CaGBC implement a LEED Volume program for LEED v2009?

The LEED Volume program provides a streamlined certification path for organizations planning to certify a large number of projects. The CaGBC has evaluated the program and determined it to be sound. However it requires an entirely distinct certification process, one which the CaGBC is not in a position to replicate given the relatively small number of organizations in Canada that would benefit from this program (it requires at least 25 buildings to be certified in a 3-year period). Organizations interested in pursuing volume certification for Canadian projects have the option to register with the GBCI. Participating projects will have to follow the USGBC rating systems. As there are some differences between USGBC and CaGBC rating systems, potential applicants should carefully evaluate their situation before pursuing volume certification.

The LEED Volume program is available for the following USGBC rating systems:

- LEED 2009 for New Construction and Major Renovations
- LEED 2009 for Commercial Interiors
- LEED 2009 for Retail: New Construction and Major Renovations
- LEED 2009 for Retail: Commercial Interiors
- LEED 2009 for Existing Buildings: Operations and Maintenance

Note that Canadians have access to the LEED Volume program under the LEED v4 rating systems.

Will the CaGBC release a version of *LEED for Neighborhood Development (ND) 2009*?

The CaGBC collaborated with the USGBC to develop Alternative Compliance Paths (ACPs) for Canadian neighbourhood development projects wishing to pursue LEED certification. The Alternative Compliance Paths provide alternative credit requirements that reference Canadian regulations, programs, and standards.

Canadian projects interested in pursuing *LEED ND 2009* register with the GBCI. Additional information, including the Canadian ACPs for *LEED ND 2009*, is available on the [CaGBC's website](#).

I have heard of some mid-rise home projects that are registering with the USGBC. Is this allowed?

The USGBC offers the *LEED for Homes v2009* Mid-rise Program for the residential portion of housing projects that are between 4 and 6 storeys tall. Homes in Canada can follow this program through their LEED Canada for Homes Provider. More information is available at www.cagbc.org/homes. Note that under LEED v4 the Multi-family Mid-rise program now extends to projects between 4 and 8 storeys tall.