



U.S. ARMY FACILITIES LEED AWAY FROM SPIRiT

By Rebekah Rosenfeld, Editor

Contractors who want to bid on U.S. Army facility projects need to be on board with green building and familiarize themselves with the United States Green Building Council's (USGBC) Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system.

In 2001, the United States government mandated that any new U.S. Army facility built must be sustainable and environmentally friendly. In response, the Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management (OACSIM) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) developed "a self-assessing system designed to help the Army achieve facilities that meet the needs of current missions and accommodate future missions in a sustainable, cost-effective, environmentally friendly manner." USACE developed the sustainable project rating system, known as SPiRiT, to address the Army's military-specific requirements using LEED 2.0 as the template for Army's facility planners and project delivery teams to use as a requirement.

Although the USGBC had already been developed, LEED, the USACE and OACSIM had some concerns about its applicability to Army installations and decided to implement the SPiRiT rating system, designed specifically for Army facilities. However, since the development of both SPiRiT and LEED, standards have been modified and changed, so the Army has decided to adopt LEED as its rating system for its military facilities except for the Army Family Housing (AFH) projects.

"The intent was to keep it [SPiRiT] up, and then we realized that we were probably not using resources carefully and because LEED is changing, and they [USGBC] have incorporated some of the things that we initially had concerns about," says Harry Goradia, mechanical engineer with USACE. "Since the Green Building Council modified their standards on a few things, we just felt it was not necessary

to continue a parallel system."

Although the LEED rating system has four different levels of certification—certified, silver, gold and platinum—the requirement for Army facilities is LEED Silver.

"Based on other SPiRiT projects, we did some analysis and actual project review of some of the projects and we found that we can achieve the high-end of LEED certification," Goradia says. "Now that it is a law for government buildings to use EPACT 2005 (Energy Policy Act of 2005), when projects meet the law, it guarantees us so many points in energy enhancement, we feel that we can easily meet LEED Silver without a whole lot of trouble."

Goradia says the U.S. Department of Defense's (DoD) decision to make EPACT a requirement has upped the money for projects by 2 percent which will go towards implementing EPACT.

CONTRACTORS NEED TO KNOW

Although all Army projects must meet LEED Silver and follow EPACT requirements, Goradia says there is a lot of leeway with the projects. "The individual project team on a design-



FOR more INFORMATION



Harry Goradia is a mechanical engineer for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. For more information, visit the Army's Construction Engineering Research Laboratory Web site at www.cecer.army.mil/sustdesign.

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build project may require certain LEED points as mandatory or preferred based on their own installation, local regulations and desires to what they want,” Goradia says. “We want contractors to be innovative and give us some really good environmentally friendly facilities.”

The type of project determines how many points from the LEED credit checklist will qualify for LEED Silver. LEED for New Construction requires 33 to 38 points which are determined from a checklist which evaluates the following: sustainable sites, water efficiency, energy and atmosphere, materials and resources, indoor environmental quality and the innovation and design process. LEED for Core and Shell requires 28 to 33 points for LEED Silver and LEED for Existing Buildings requires 40 to 47 points. For a complete list of all of the different types of LEED projects and their checklists, visit www.usgbc.org.

Until LEED for Homes is adopted for Army facilities, SPiRiT Gold is the standard for family housing projects. Based on the SPiRiT rating system, 50 to 74 points will achieve a SPiRiT Gold certification. The SPiRiT rating system is similar to LEED, but in addition to the LEED categories, it also evaluates the facility delivery process, the current mission—design for operation and maintenance—and the future mission—design for adaptation, renewal and future uses. For a complete checklist for the SPiRiT rating system, visit www.cecer.army.mil/SustDesign/SPiRiT.cfm.

Goradia says he is pleased with the projects built for sustainability. “We definitely have been getting better facilities,” he says. With increased energy efficiency, and a lot more attention to building orientation—daylighting and building envelopes—the buildings are better for those who occupy them. There are many opportunities for contractors who wish to bid on Army projects. Simply become acquainted with the LEED rating system and energy-efficient resources to keep ahead of the curve and increase business. ♦

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