Regional Priority Credits Frequently Asked Questions

What are Regional Priority Credits (RPCs)?

The concept of Regional Priority Credits was introduced in the LEED 2009 rating systems to incentivize the achievement of credits that address geographically specific environmental priorities. RPCs are not new LEED credits, but instead are existing credits that USGBC chapters and regional councils have designated as being particularly important for their areas. The incentive to achieve the credits is in the form of a bonus point. If an RPC is earned, then a bonus point is awarded to the project's total points. Each specific area – referenced by ZIP code – has six RPCs per rating system. A project may earn up to four bonus points as a result of earning RPCs, with one bonus point earned per RPC.

How do RPCs work?

Since RPCs are not new credits, LEED project teams do not need to attempt them in addition to the existing LEED credits they are attempting. Upon project registration, LEED Online automatically determines a project's RPCs based on its ZIP code. If the project earns an RPC, it will also earn the associated bonus point. If a project earns more than four RPCs, the team can choose the credits from which the bonus points will be earned. The USGBC Web site contains state-by-state lists of the RPCs. Visit www.usgbc.org/LEED2009 for more information and to download your state's list of RPCs.

Are international projects eligible to earn bonus points via RPCs?

In the first iteration of RPCs, international projects cannot earn the associated bonus points. USGBC is, however, considering the best method to provide similar incentive for projects in areas that are not defined by U.S. ZIP codes.

What if my project contains more than one ZIP code?

The LEED Online registration process requires that project teams enter a single ZIP code. The ZIP code selected by the project team during registration will be the one used to determine the associated RPCs.

My project is registered for an earlier version of LEED (i.e., LEED-NCv2.2). Will it be eligible for the bonus points if it earns one or more RPC?

RPCs are exclusive to LEED 2009 and therefore, only projects registered to pursue certification under a LEED 2009 rating system are eligible to earn the bonus points. Projects registered under a previous version of a LEED rating system have the option of transitioning to the corresponding LEED 2009 rating system, and they can do so without paying a new registration fee if the transition occurs by December 31, 2009. Visit www.usgbc.org/LEEDv3 for more information.

How do I read the spreadsheets that present the RPCs for each state?

The spreadsheets contain the ZIP codes in every state and the six RPCs for each ZIP code. Each spreadsheet contains one tab for each of the five initial LEED 2009 Rating Systems: New Construction, Schools, Core and Shell, Commercial Interiors, and Existing Buildings: Operations and Maintenance. While the spreadsheets are locked, users can use the sort function and increase column widths to view the information. The ZIP codes are listed in ascending numeric order, but users may also use the find

function to locate a particular ZIP code. The columns to the right of each ZIP code (numbered one through six) indicate the six RPCs for each ZIP code.

In the spreadsheets, what do the percentage notations (i.e. "75%" or "1%") mean?
Some RPCs are multi-threshold credits. In each case, the bonus point is awarded only when a specific threshold is met. For example, WEc3, Water Use Reduction (in LEED for New Construction, Schools, and Core and Shell), includes three thresholds ranging from 30% water savings to 40% water savings. If a spreadsheet indicates WEc3(40%), a project must achieve the 40% threshold in order to earn the associated bonus point.

What if a ZIP code is not on a state's spreadsheet?
Despite great care from USGBC chapter volunteers and USGBC staff, some ZIP codes may have been erroneously left off of a state's spreadsheet. If this is the case, project teams are advised to refer to Zip codes that are adjacent or closest to the one in question. For the purposes of registering a project in LEED Online, a project's RPCs will be manually added LEED Online administrators if a) the project's Zip code does not appear on the public lists or b) the RPCs that are initially, automatically assigned upon registration do not match the correct, publicly posted RPCs. Project teams are asked to use the LEED Online Feedback tool to indicate the project ID number, project Zip code, referenced adjacent/nearby Zip code, and correct RPCs.

To learn more about Regional Priority Credits and to download a region-by-region list of priority credits, visit www.usgbc.org/leed2009.