

# LEED and DGNB building certification: The most important facts

Increasing energy efficiency, reducing raw material consumption and sustainability: The environmental requirements on buildings are becoming stricter, not least because of tougher EU policies. Building certification systems offer a comprehensive overview and assess the sustainability of buildings and construction products. LEED and the DGNB are two leading systems meant to simplify planning and implementation of construction projects with comprehensive assessments.

## **Building certification for sustainable construction**

Building certifications have been a focus of the industry not only since the most recent European construction guidelines. LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) already developed a system in the US in 1998 for classifying environmental building – a so-called green building certification system. Since 2008, the German DGNB (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Nachhaltiges Bauen – German Sustainable Building Council) has also been committed to strengthening and promoting sustainable building through clear assessments. Originally developed for the US and German markets respectively, the two models were able to gain international acceptance. Their high degree of flexibility allows a great variety of buildings, from private houses to office complexes, to be assessed and country-specific requirements to be met.

Both certification systems stand for sophisticated and objective assessment. They evaluate not only the status quo but also all life cycles of the buildings. Environmental, social and economic issues are taken into account in the assessment. Sustainability and future viability of buildings are in demand. The goal is to create an incentive not only to meet but even to exceed the standards set by governments concerning sustainable building.

The certificates issued by LEED and the DGNB have a decisive influence on construction planning, calls for tenders and product decisions.

## **LEED: Winning on points**

The LEED system is based on the review of numerous criteria, divided into five main categories:

- Sustainable construction sites
- Water efficiency
- Energy and atmosphere
- Materials and resources

- Air quality in buildings

After the assessment phase points are assigned according to the level of fulfilment. Whether the certificate is then issued depends on the number of points achieved. LEED issues certificates for four quality categories: certified, silver, gold and platinum.

### **DGNB: Assessment according to level of fulfilment**

The DGNB also works with a four-level model and issues the certificates according to the level of fulfilment: bronze, silver, gold and platinum. Criteria from six topic areas are analysed:

- Environmental quality
- Economic quality
- Socio-cultural and functional quality
- Technical quality
- Process quality
- Site quality

The DGNB offers an online navigator that serves as a guide for the process of selecting building products. The navigator lists all relevant product information transparently. Manufacturers, architects, planners, investors, workmen and auditors can use the tool.

### **Why are building certifications relevant?**

Building assessments and certifications play an important role, especially for investors and architects. Due to the increasing demand for buildings that are as sustainable as possible, they promise value enhancement for properties and building complexes. The certification status offers a quick overview for assessing the building.

Tremco illbruck welcomes the ideals of the leading green building assessment systems and contributes to strengthening their relevance from an economic, environmental, social and technical point of view with innovative building products.