

WorldGBC Case Study Library

Submission Criteria

2023 Update

Overview

The World Green Building Council Case Study Library is the ‘go-to’ resource for certified best practice case studies in the built environment, **showcasing some of the world’s most cutting-edge sustainable buildings**.

Each case study demonstrates outstanding performance of an operational building asset across a minimum of one of WorldGBC’s three strategic impact areas: [Climate Action](#); [Health, Equity and Resilience](#); and [Resource and Circularity](#).

Whether it be in relation to health benefits, regeneration of nature, or achieving net zero carbon, WorldGBC recognises these case studies as global leaders for sustainable built environments, which have been validated by established certification schemes, rating tools or other third-party verification.

Our Case Study Library is continually evolving to highlight the ‘best in class’ buildings that excel in key areas of sustainability, and recognise the growing market demand for low-carbon, healthy, equitable and circular buildings.

The Case Study Library is a ‘living’ resource that’s updated regularly to ensure the most recent examples of sustainable buildings, as well as the evolution of resources that address user issues and improve capacity and functionality.

Submission Criteria

The following checklist is the current submission criteria against which submissions are assessed by the WorldGBC team. WorldGBC reserves the right to update the submission criteria in the future.

Net Zero Operational Carbon

Case studies of buildings and developments that are eligible to feature in the library:

- Are operational at time of submission
- Display best practice outcomes in energy efficiency
- Are powered by renewable energy

- Have been verified and certified as “net zero energy and/or carbon” projects, ie. through Green Building Council (GBC) certification schemes or other third-party certification schemes related to zero carbon

Data must be provided to support the case study submission

Net Zero Whole Life Carbon

Case studies of buildings and developments that are eligible to feature in the library:

- Meet all the criteria of the ‘Net Zero Operational Carbon’ category
- Completed construction or renovation/refurbishment and are operational at the time of submission
- Demonstrate best practice and industry leadership in embodied carbon emissions reduction through efficient and lean design, utilise low carbon materials, minimise emissions from construction processes and implement circular economy principles
- Conducted life cycle assessments (LCA) and demonstrate a maximum reduction of embodied carbon emissions possible and reduction references, if any, with local/regional/international targets or benchmarks
- Compensated for residual upfront embodied carbon
- Have LCA verification and the building certified under a GBC, or other third-party certification schemes, with LCA or net zero embodied carbon or net zero whole life carbon as one of their assessment criteria
- If the building has not obtained certifications or hasn’t been LCA verified, the building can be submitted under ‘special pleading’ to WorldGBC for approval

Data must be provided to support the case study submission.

Health, Equity and Resilience

Case studies of buildings and developments that are eligible to feature in the Case Study Library:

- Operational at time of submission
- Enhance the health, equity and resilience of people throughout the building and construction lifecycle (occupants, construction workers, or material supply chain workers) with details of which areas of the value chain are targeted
- Have been verified and certified through a third-party rating pathway to display health, and/or equity, and/or resilience to exceptional levels. Accepted in submission will be:
 - Cross-cutting sustainability rating schemes that include a relevant section of a green building certification such as Green Star ‘Resilience’ credits
 - Achievement of a health-based certification such as WELL
 - Supply chain or operational assessments, such as indoor environmental quality monitoring, social value measurements or supply chain audits.
 - Alongside the above categories, ‘special pleading’ can also be used to evidence outstanding performance in the health, equity and resilience categories
- Resilience in the built environment includes adaptation of the built environment to physical climate risk, as well as wider system stressors. Find out more through WorldGBC’s [Climate Resilience Guide](#)

- If a Sustainability Certification is being used to demonstrate health performance, details **MUST** be provided on the level of achievement on health-related credits or sections (eg. 90% 'Health and Wellbeing' section credits achieved).
- Submissions without details on the health section (eg. BREEAM 'Outstanding') will not be accepted.

Data should be provided to support the case study submission as far as possible.

Resource and Circularity

Case studies of buildings and developments that are eligible to feature in the library:

- Completed construction or renovation/refurbishment or are operational at time of submission
- Demonstrate the principles of the circular economy in operation, such as design for disassembly or use of alternative or reused materials
- Demonstrate best practice and industry leadership in embodied carbon reduction through efficient and low carbon design, material use and construction processes
 - Minimise emissions from construction processes and implement circular economy principles
 - Conduct life cycle assessments (LCA) to provide appropriate WLC data
- Compensated for residual upfront embodied carbon emissions, if applicable
- Demonstrate market-leading resource efficiency, such as water utilisation, biodiversity and natural capital alongside other natural resources
- Outstanding performance has been verified and/or certified by methods including:
 - In-use performance measurements
 - Rating schemes — including both outstanding achievement of the relevant circularity elements of green building certification, such as Cradle2Cradle [building scale], and/or undertake circularity or resource-specific analysis, such as LCA, or zero-waste certifications.
- Demonstrate embodied carbon reduction and references, if any, with local/regional benchmarks or targets
 - Innovative or exceptional products and materials with third-party certifications
 - Buildings without third-party verification can be put forward through 'special pleading' cases
 - Innovative products or technologies such as Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage

Special Pleading

'special pleading' functionality has been included within all areas of case study submissions to allow for the submission of case studies that do not meet the requirements of the above. We expect the majority of these submissions will not have achieved third-party verification but will have pursued healthy and/or net zero status.

Case studies that are not verified will be judged on a bespoke basis through a merit-based approach, on the following factors:

- Does the case study achieve the remaining submission criteria, with the exception of third-party verification?
 - It must demonstrate the same level of performance – keep to operational buildings only for both health and net zero areas
- Are there alternative methods of verifying claims outside certification? Eg. awards, press coverage, on-site performance testing, (eg. air or water), surveys and occupant satisfaction, academic work
- **Most importantly:** does the case study represent an outstanding example of sustainability in the built environment? Would the Case Study Library benefit from the inclusion of this submission?

The checklist and verification of Case Study Library submissions will be utilised by the WorldGBC team for consistent analysis and approval of submitted case studies. WorldGBC's Senior Leadership team will manage this process.

Story-telling element

To provide a unique element for our Case Study Library, all submitters are asked to share best practice and lessons learned to provide a personal story-telling element to case studies.

WorldGBC proposes that case studies which meet other criteria but have not provided valuable qualitative content to supplement their submission are not removed from consideration for the Library. If successful in achieving other criteria, WorldGBC will contact these case study submitters and invite them to provide further details to enhance this section of the library.

Communicating participation in the library

WorldGBC will contact all organisations who have submitted a case study, whether successful or not. All organisations will be invited to continue submitting case studies and unsuccessful applicants will be reminded of the checklist of criteria for inclusion in the Case Study Library. Successful applicants will be contacted to inform them of their case study being accepted, along with further communications and materials to promote the case study.

Contact

For any queries, please contact the respective programme leads:

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