

Green Building Glossary

Benchmarking: Benchmarking is a way to rate the energy efficiency of a building, using the federal Energy Star benchmarking system. This provides a score which ranks the building on a percentile basis against comparable buildings nationwide. Energy Star also provides the energy intensity, or annual energy use per square foot, which is useful for comparing smaller groups of buildings.

Retro-commissioning: Existing-building commissioning, also known as retro-commissioning (RCx), is an event in the life of a building that applies a systematic investigation process for improving or optimizing a building's overall performance and the way it's maintained and operated. The RCx process most often focuses on dynamic energy-using systems with the goal of reducing energy waste, obtaining energy cost savings, and identifying and fixing existing problems. Although RCx may include recommendations for capital improvements, the primary focus is on using diagnostic testing to identify and implement operation and maintenance tune-up activities to optimize the building systems.

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design for Existing Buildings

(LEED-EB): LEED-EB is a rating system to maximize the energy and environmental performance of buildings, It provides a recognized, performance-based benchmark for building owners and operators to measure operations, improvements and maintenance on a consistent scale.

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design for New Construction and Major Renovations (LEED-NC): LEED-NC is a rating system for designing and constructing commercial, institutional, and government buildings to maximize energy and environmental performance. Targeting the design and construction phases of a building, LEED-NC addresses the environmental impacts of site and materials selection, demolition and construction.

LEED-NC promotes improved practices in the integrated design approach from start to finish (commissioning), site selection and development, water and energy use, environmentally preferred construction products/finishes/furnishings, waste stream management, indoor environmental quality, and innovation in sustainable design and construction.

Green Leasing: DGS is seeking out and selecting State facility leases for spaces of 5,000 square feet or more in buildings that meet a minimum Energy Star rating whenever such spaces are cost effective and meet the State's programmatic needs. Where feasible, DGS is also seeking buildings that can or have obtained LEED certification.

Solar and Other Clean On-Site Power Generation: DGS is pursuing on-site clean and/or renewable power generation to reduce energy consumption from the utility grid.

Environmental Preferable Purchasing (EPP): AB 498 (Chan, Statutes of 2001-02) directed the development of an EPP Best Practices Manual and activities by DGS in conjunction with the California Integrated Waste Management Board (CIWMB) and other State agencies, as well as to pursue and implement measures to improve environmentally preferable purchasing of goods and services in the State.

References: CA Commissioning Collaborative, CA Public Utilities Commission, U.S. Green Building Council.