Global Sustainable Buildings Guide - Philippines

Green Certification

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# Is there a nationally adopted and recognized form of certification for buildings? What is it and is it mandatory for all new buildings and refurbished buildings?

We confirm that there are nationally adopted and recognized certifications for buildings. However, these certifications are not mandatory, i.e., they are not required under Philippine law.

**BERDE Program**

The Building for Ecologically Responsive Design Excellence (BERDE) Program is a program established by the Philippine Green Building Council1 (PHILGBC) as the Philippines’ own national **voluntary** green building rating system to facilitate green building projects in the country.

The BERDE Green Building Rating System, developed by PHILGBC, is used to measure, verify and monitor the environmental performance of buildings that go beyond existing mandatory regulations and standards. BERDE considers energy efficiency in all aspects, including air, water and waste in buildings to create a healthy environment for users and improve the quality of life.

The BERDE Certification is the formal assessment, rating and certification process for projects of the BERDE Program. A building can be deemed BERDE-certified whether it is a new construction or a fit-out project, undergoing renovations, or an existing project only improving its operations.

BERDE Certification is **not** mandatory. However, at the national level, it is recognized as the National Voluntary Green Building Rating System by the Philippine government. Certain government agencies, such as the Department of Energy (DOE), have used BERDE as a guide in developing policies and programs for green building and sustainability for the building sector. At the local level, several local government units have incorporated BERDE as part of their policy to ensure the environmental performance of projects within their respective jurisdictions.

**GREEEN Program**

The Geared for Resiliency and Energy Efficiency for the Environment (GREEEN) Program is a collection of documents and tools that can aid designers in developing and achieving green building goals. It was developed by the Philippine Green Building Initiative, Inc. (PGBI).2

The GREEEN certification process begins with goal setting, and involves design development, project completion, evaluation, and culminates in the issuance of the GREEEN certification. The GREEEN green building rating system provides a code-based, environment-responsive set of criteria to evaluate buildings that are newly constructed or undergoing major renovations.

Similar to the BERDE Program, the GREEEN Program is purely voluntary.

**EDGE Zero Carbon certification**

The Excellence in Design for Greater Efficiencies (EDGE) provides a free software, a green building standard, and an international green building certification system. It was developed by the International Finance Corporation (IFC).3

Under the EDGE Zero Carbon certification, projects may be certified as carbon neutral, where there should be a minimum of 20% savings in water and embodied energy, 40% energy savings on-site, and 100% energy savings through renewables or carbon offset.

The EDGE Zero Carbon certification covers buildings for education, homes, hospitality, hospitals, light industries, offices, retail, and warehouses. As a qualification, the building must have been in operation for at least one year at 75% of normal occupancy. Its energy use information must be entered into the EDGE Carbon Calculator provided in the EDGE Application.

Once a building is awarded an EDGE Zero Carbon certificate, the certificate will indicate the year of award and its expiration date and would need to be recertified (by way of submitting annual records) to maintain its EDGE Zero Carbon status.

The EDGE Zero Carbon certification may be applied for voluntarily.

**LEED certification**

Another green certification used for buildings is Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED). It is a green building rating system developed by the US Green Building Council4 and is globally recognized. LEED certification provides a framework for healthy, highly efficient and cost-saving green buildings, which offer environmental, social and governance benefits. LEED can be used for all building types and all building phases, such as new construction, interior fit outs, operations and maintenance, and core and shell. The rating system varies per building phase.

To achieve LEED certification, a project earns points by complying with the prerequisites and credits that address carbon, energy, water, waste, transportation, materials, health and indoor environmental quality. The project then undergoes a verification and review process by the Green Business Certification Inc. (GBCI) and the accumulated points correspond to a certain level of LEED certification.

The LEED certification is not mandatory but has been recognized by the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA)5 as part of the criteria for the Green, Healthy, Smart, and Sustainable Ecozone Award in 2020.

[1] PHILGBC is a national non-stock, non-profit organisation that promotes the sharing of knowledge on green building practices to the industry to ensure a sustainable environment.

[2] The PGBI is a non-profit, voluntary group of professional associations involved with the built-environment, which shares a common concern on the impacts of global warming and climate change.

[3] The International Finance Corporation is an international financial institution that offers investment, advisory and asset-management services to encourage private-sector development in less developed countries.

[4] The US Green Building Council membership-based non-profit organization that promotes sustainability in building design, construction and operation.

[5] The PEZA is a government agency tasked with promoting investments, generating exports and creating employment by granting incentives and assistance to investors in PEZA Economic Zone.

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