

Zero Carbon Pre-Registration Success Guide



The Value of Zero Carbon

Carbon in the building sector is associated with the energy embodied in the procurement and installation of building materials and in the energy consumed during operations. The building industry accounts for nearly 40% of the total global carbon emissions. By 2060, 2.48 trillion square feet of real estate will be constructed or renovated, which will be equivalent to a new New York City every 34 days.

A Zero Carbon approach is critical for ensuring growth in the building sector is socially just, culturally rich, and ecologically restorative. ILFI's Zero Carbon certification program was released in April 2018 and is the only global standard requiring full decarbonization. Certification ensures that a project's zero carbon strategy is holistic and data-driven and can increase real estate asset value^{1, 2}.

Pre-Registration

Project teams considering pursuing Zero Carbon certification are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the Zero Carbon Standard and Handbooks and other program resources. Program Standards are available for free, while the Early Project Guidebook, Handbook, and many other [resources](#) are available to Living Future Members.

What if I don't meet these requirements?

For those projects nearing construction or that are already complete, it is critical to understand each requirement, as Zero Carbon requires commitment and effort early in the design process to ensure success. If a project has passed a critical milestone and cannot provide the necessary calculations and documentation to meet Zero Carbon certification, additional certification pathways such as Zero Energy may still be feasible. ILFI can also provide [Technical Assistance](#) to project teams who desire a deeper understanding of our program requirements by emailing zc.support@living-future.org. A variety of options are available including Feasibility Studies, Design Development Reviews, In-House Workshops, or custom services tailored to your project needs.

How to use this checklist

This checklist is intended for project teams considering registering for Zero Carbon certification. It is a guide to understanding critical project milestones required for successful certification. Project teams should not rely solely on this checklist for determining if their project will be able to successfully certify under an ILFI program, but should also refer to the Standards and Handbooks for specific requirements for their preferred certification pathway.

1. [Just How Much do Green Certifications Really Impact Asset Values?, Logan Nagel](#)

2. [Green Building and Property Value, The Appraisal Institute](#)

| Yes/No | Requirements | Project Phase |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| Embodied Carbon Calculations | | |
| | Can the team demonstrate that reducing embodied carbon was a key goal in the project's design? | Design Development |
| | Did the team complete an iterative life cycle assessment (using an approved tool) before construction or renovation? | |
| | Can the team demonstrate, with documentation, that low embodied carbon materials were specified during the design and material procurement process (using an approved tool)? | Design Development and Construction Documents |
| | Is the team able to provide comparative embodied carbon evaluations or carbon-based specifications for material or product alternatives to document intentional actions were taken to reduce the embodied carbon impacts of the project? | Construction Documents |
| Embodied Carbon Reductions | | |
| | Is the team able to meet the 10% reduction in primary materials (structure, foundation, and envelope) requirement? (This does not apply to interior scope projects) | Design and Construction |
| | For interior scope projects can the team demonstrate that they chose interior materials with lower embodied carbon values than the industry baseline? Interior projects must include at a minimum carpet, wallboard and ceiling material in the embodied carbon assessments. | |

| Yes/No | Requirements | Project Phase |
|----------------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| Embodied Carbon Threshold | | |
| | Is the project's total embodied carbon impact (sum of interior and primary materials impacts of stages A1-A5) equal to or below the 500 kg CO ₂ e/m ² threshold? ³ | Design and Construction |
| Carbon Offset | | |
| | Is the team able to offset 100% of the embodied carbon emissions impacts with the use of on-site carbon sequestering materials or by a one-time purchase of carbon offsets that are third party verified (including verification of the carbon credit accounting and transaction)? | Construction |

If the response is NO to any of the above questions the team may not be eligible for Zero Carbon certification and is encouraged to apply for Zero Energy. Unique project types that propose innovative pathways in alignment with the intent of Zero Carbon may be considered for Zero Carbon through the Special Projects team. Please email zc.support@living-future.org.

If the team has reviewed all [required documentation](#) and feels confident they can demonstrate intentional actions to reduce embodied carbon and meet all operational carbon requirements, they are encouraged to pursue Zero Carbon Certification. For more details about these requirements, please review the [Zero Carbon Standard](#) and Handbook (available to ILFI Members), and email zc.support@living-future.org.

³. All project teams must strive to meet the threshold and document their efforts to reduce embodied carbon, as well as provide a quantitative analysis of the primary drivers of the project's total embodied carbon.

I am ready to register my project!

ILFI's [Project Registration Details](#) page outlines the program fees, benefits, and registration process. Project registration is available to all members. When a project team is ready to register, they can begin the application process from the Member Dashboard, Steps to Register a Project. For questions about registration or additional support, email sales@living-future.org. ILFI's Sales team will then guide the project team through the registration process.

Additional Resources

[Embodied Carbon Quick Guide](#)

[A Guide to Reducing Embodied Carbon](#)