



## MATERIAL SELECTION v1.2

The following criteria will help you select the most environmentally, economically and socially preferable products (and/or materials) for your next building project.

- *Assessment* – Think of the goal as selecting the most environmentally, economically and socially preferable products available, and remember, because few products will meet every criteria you will need to rely on personal judgement and common sense.
  1. *Performance* - Will the product perform its purpose? Is it durable, easily maintained or repaired relative to alternatives?
  2. *Sustainable* – Is the product sourced, produced, used and disposed of in an environmentally and socially responsible way ('Lifecycle' approach)? Refer to *Environmental Product Labeling* below.
    - I. *Toxicity* – Is the product non-toxic and unlikely to release harmful substances before, during and after its useful life? E.g. PVC, lead, harmful volatile organic compounds such as formaldehyde and solvents etc.
    - II. *Re-use and recycling* – Can the product be re-used or recycled? Alternatively, does it have a significant recycled content?
    - III. *Local Production* – Can the product be produced and sourced locally at a competitive price to avoid unnecessary transport costs?
  3. *Affordability* – Is the product affordable in your local market?
- *Environmental Product Labeling* – Look for **recognised** eco labels backed by *independent third party certification*. Some of the more recognised eco labels available include Energy Rating labels, Energy Star, Water Efficiency Labels, Environmental Choice, Sensitive Choice, FSC, PEFC, TTIG, Green Tick. Some international eco-labels of note include Environmental Choice (Canada and Australia), Green Seal, Greenguard, SCS certified and C2C certified (US), EU Eco-Label (EU), Blue Angel (Germany), EcoMark (Japan), Green Choice (Russia), Green Label (Hong Kong and Thailand), Eco Label (China, Korea), Green Mark (Taiwan) and Nordic Swan (Sweden).





### **References**

Beacon Pathway – [www.beaconpathway.org.nz](http://www.beaconpathway.org.nz)

BRANZ – level book series and website [www.level.org.nz](http://www.level.org.nz)

Comparing energy efficient appliances – [www.energyrating.com.au](http://www.energyrating.com.au)

Comparing water efficient plumbing and appliances – [www.waterrating.gov.au](http://www.waterrating.gov.au)

Department of Building & Housing – [www.dbh.govt.nz](http://www.dbh.govt.nz)

Efficient home energy and water use – [www.smarterhomes.org.nz](http://www.smarterhomes.org.nz)

Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority – [www.eeca.govt.nz](http://www.eeca.govt.nz)

Environmental Choice New Zealand – [www.enviro-choice.org.nz](http://www.enviro-choice.org.nz)

Greenbuild – [www.greenbuild.co.nz](http://www.greenbuild.co.nz)

Landcare Research – [www.landcareresearch.co.nz](http://www.landcareresearch.co.nz)

Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries (Sustainable Timber) – [www.maf.govt.nz](http://www.maf.govt.nz)