

Formalizing Material Impact Through the CMF

LPA Material Impact Program



CASE STUDY



LPA
AEC
[Website](#)

2025

The Challenge

LPA, an integrated design firm with seven studios across the U.S., recognized the need for a unified, actionable approach to understanding and improving material impacts across projects. While the firm had long embraced sustainability, the growing complexity of material data—across impact categories, certifications, and performance metrics—made it increasingly difficult to connect everyday design decisions with measurable outcomes.

Without a shared structure, even well-intentioned initiatives risked operating in isolation, limiting the firm's ability to scale impact, track progress, and communicate results consistently.

The Approach

To bridge this gap, LPA is developing the Material Impact Program (MIP)—an internal framework that organizes all materials-related tools, resources, and workflows under one umbrella. The program identifies eleven priority material sustainability topics as its core structure. These topics serve as subcategories within the five impact areas of the AIA Materials Pledge and Common Materials Framework (CMF), creating an alignment that allows LPA to map quantitative data points directly from CMF Prioritization v1.0 for consistency and comparability.

The MIP was designed with three primary goals:

(1) To bridge abstract impact categories and technical data.

The eleven priority topics help designers understand and apply the five CMF impact categories conceptually and consistently. While the CMF's sub-buckets provided a strong foundation, LPA tailored its topics to better reflect firmwide priorities. Some topics align to CMF sub-buckets, others to factors, and some combine both—ensuring that certifications and metric-level data can be mapped for industry alignment.

CMF IMPLEMENTATION TOOLKIT RESOURCES

-  [AEC/O CMF Implementation Toolkit](#)
-  [2025 Data Ecosystem Report](#)
-  [Guidelines for Creating Material Decision-Making Criteria Based on the CMF](#)
-  [Guidelines for Aligning Your Existing Material Decision-Making Criteria With the CMF](#)

(2) To connect multiple material impact initiatives under one structure.

The MIP currently integrates three initiatives: Specifications Vetting Criteria, Library Standards, and the Project Material Impact Workshop.

- The Specifications Vetting Criteria address all eleven topics, guiding design teams through key sustainability considerations.
- The Library Standards are focused and pragmatic—“getting the worst out and the best in.” Rather than assessing all library products holistically, the team began with a Phaseout Plan linked to Chemicals of Concern Avoidance and a Preferred Product Collection tied to Embodied Carbon Optimization.
- The Project Material Impact Workshop brings all eleven topics to the table, allowing teams to identify which areas best support specific project goals.

Together, these initiatives create a flexible yet cohesive structure that can evolve and expand to include future resources.

(3) To address the five impact categories both quantitatively and qualitatively.

The program is designed to deepen collective understanding of material impacts—through data, but also through dialogue. By aligning CMF data points to LPA’s eleven priority topics, the firm can measure impacts quantitatively. At the same time, tools like the Material Impact Program Guide and Project Material Impact Workshop support qualitative education and design strategy—connecting data to storytelling and client goals.

For example, the Embodied Carbon Optimization topic focuses on whole-building LCAs, while Waste Management Optimization addresses deconstruction and reuse—topics not explicitly covered by the CMF but essential to Climate Health and the Circular Economy.

“Alignment is a journey. Our goal was to make it tangible—to help our teams see how every material choice contributes to impact,” says Jill Pedro, Architect and Material Impact Manager, LPA.

The Eleven Priority Topics

Crosswalked to the CMF Impact Areas:



Human Health

- Ingredient Transparency and Low-VOCs
- Restricted Substance List Certifications
- Chemicals of Concern Avoidance



Climate Health

- Manufacturer Decarbonization
- Environmental Product Declarations
- Embodied Carbon Optimization



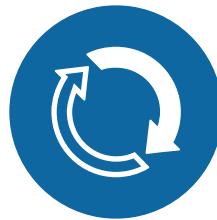
Ecosystem Health

- Responsible and Biobased Sourcing
 - Human Health
- Ingredient Transparency and Low-VOCs
- Restricted Substance List Certifications
- Chemicals of Concern Avoidance



Social Health & Equity

- Manufacturer Fair Labor Practices



Circular Economy

- Recycled and Reintegrated Content
- Next Life Cyclability
- Waste Management Optimization

CMF Connection

The five impact categories of the AIA Materials Pledge and CMF directly informed the structure of the Material Impact Program. LPA is using the CMF Prioritization v1.0 Airtable tool and syntax to formally map certifications, factors, and metrics to its eleven topics—creating consistency in both data exchange and impact measurement.

The CMF was one of several key references that shaped the program, alongside Habitable's Informed Product Guidance, LEED v5 criteria, Carbon Leadership Forum reports, Green Science Policy Institute's Six Classes, Design for Freedom International Guidance, Cradle to Cradle Certified v4.1, Gensler Product Sustainability Standard (GPS), and Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) principles.

Collaboration and Development

The program is led by the Material Impact Manager on LPA's Sustainability + Applied Research team and shaped through collaboration across disciplines and leadership. Internal previews and feedback were gathered from the CEO and CDO, Director of Sustainability + Applied Research, strategic planning committees, and representatives from architecture, interiors, landscape, structural, Integrated Design (IT/BIM), and Integrated Communication (Brand/Marketing).

External dialogue—with product manufacturers, sustainability experts, mindful MATERIALS, and other Forum members—has also informed development and direction.

Implementation & Next Steps

Several resources are already live in beta, with pilot projects underway:

- Library Standards (forms, labels, posters, tracker)
- Specifications Vetting Criteria (form)
- Project Material Impact Workshop (digital whiteboard template)

Additional resources currently in development include:

- Material Impact Program Guide (Why, What, How)
- Master Specifications Matrix
- Material Impact Submittal Form
- Project Material Impact Tracker Template
- Integration into a mindful MATERIALS tech partner platform

Firmwide rollout begins in Q4 2025 with education and training sessions at each LPA studio, led by the Material Impact Manager, Specifications Manager, and Material Resource Specialist.

In 2026, the team will focus on vetting master specifications and piloting the Material Impact Workshop and related tools on select projects.

It's worth noting that the program was shaped through nearly a year of informal piloting. These early efforts—goal-setting meetings, category prioritization, evolving forms for CMF and AIA Materials Pledge data, and spreadsheet-based tracking—laid the groundwork for what is now becoming a formal, structured program.

Expected Outcomes

As the Material Impact Program becomes embedded across the firm, LPA anticipates:

- A consistent structure for addressing material impacts across all disciplines.
- Greater integration of quantitative and qualitative impact data into design workflows.
- A shared foundation for aligning firmwide goals with industry standards through the CMF and the broader Data Ecosystem.

Key Takeaway

The Material Impact Program demonstrates how firms can use the CMF to formalize and scale internal alignment—translating complex data into clear, actionable structures. By grounding its approach in the CMF while tailoring it to LPA's unique priorities, the firm is creating a practical bridge between measurement and meaning—one that connects data to design, and design to impact.

"Alignment is a journey. Our goal was to make it tangible—to help our teams see how every material choice contributes to impact."

— Jill Pedro, LPA, Forum Member