

Guidelines for Aligning Your Existing Material Decision-Making Criteria With the CMF

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Introduction

Introduction

Why This Guide

Suggested Background Material

Introduction

This guide is for designers, specifiers, and purchasers of building materials—owners and contractors—who have already developed a materials program or established internal guidelines for vetting products for impact.

Many firms have invested significant time and resources to develop and standardize their materials selection and vetting processes. This guidance helps you connect your existing program to the Common Materials Framework (CMF), aligning your approach with the broader industry to scale action.

The criteria outlined in [CMF Prioritization v1.0](#) were intentionally designed to reflect what’s already being requested or required by owners, architects, and designers. Chances are, much of your current program already maps to the CMF.

The CMF helps the industry speak a common language—enabling connected data, automated vetting, and streamlined reporting, all of which save time and money. While it doesn’t define what “good, better, or best” means, it provides the foundation that makes those benchmarks possible.

Your materials requirements program is where those definitions take shape. The CMF simply gives you the shared structure and terminology to align strategy, communication, and workflows—driving measurable impact reduction across your projects.

Why this Guidance: AEC/O does this sound familiar?

You've been trying to decipher, unpack, and streamline what product is best when it comes to sustainable impacts? You care about multiple impact areas but have had a hard time in consolidating this information in one place that makes sense to enable firm wide action. You signed the AIA Materials Pledge, or work on a LEED, WELL, LBC projects, or similar and would like to automate reporting and compliance.

How this Guidance Will Help You

1: Use this guidance to align your firm's existing processes with the CMF, amplify your market signal, and contribute to collective progress toward transparency and performance at scale.

2: Discover how consistent demand signals and shared language—rooted in the Common Materials Framework—empower firms to work smarter, reduce redundancy, and accelerate meaningful impact across the built environment.

3: Learn why uniting firm-level materials programs under a shared framework matters. This guidance helps bring clarity to product impact requests and aligns the industry's voice around a common approach.

“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

STOP: If you haven't read these resources, do so first.

Before you dive into implementation, explore these key resources to understand the CMF, focus your alignment, and see how shared data can accelerate impact across your organization.



Common Materials Framework

01. Introduction

02. CMF 101 Videos

03. CMF Prioritization v1.0

04. Data Ecosystem Report

05. Pre-Reads

06. Endorsement Language

07. Case Studies

08. Governance + Guidance

09. Join Us

CMF Implementation Toolkit



The Common Materials Framework, Made Actionable

Start here to understand the "why," "what," and "how" of implementing the Common Materials Framework (CMF)—and discover how aligned data and shared language drive measurable progress across our industry. Together, we can connect better material decisions to business value for everyone in the value chain.



Common Materials Framework

01. Introduction

02. Why Prioritization Matters

03. What's Included (and What's Not)

04. Aligning with CMF Prioritization v1.0

05. Governance & Guidance

06. Feedback

CMF Implementation Toolkit



The Foundation: CMF Prioritization v1.0

The Common Materials Framework (CMF) is intentionally comprehensive—spanning hundreds of ecolabels and standards, and thousands of data points aligned to five impact categories. To accelerate its usability today, mindful MATERIALS and Forum members convened to determine where to focus first.

The outcome: CMF Prioritization v1.0—a collective starting point shaped by the CMF Prioritization Task Force. This curated subset highlights the most relevant, widely used, and requested ecolabels and standards driving the market now and in the next three years.



AboutLearnSupportActCollaboration Hub

A Shared Materials Language For Smarter Material Decisions

Align Around What Matters

The Common Materials Framework (CMF) brings clarity, consistency, and collective momentum to how we communicate and act on material sustainability.

CMF Reference Guide

Explore the Guide

CMF In Action

Meet Our Tech Partners

CMF 101 Video Series

Coming Soon

One Framework. Five Impact Areas. Infinite Potential.

Between the endless acronyms, the avalanche of ecolabels and standards, and the unrealistic expectation that building product manufacturers, A&D

Starter Guide

Start here to understand the why, what, and how of implementing the Common Materials Framework (CMF)—and see how aligned data and shared language drive measurable progress across the industry.

[View Starter Guide](#)

CMF Prioritization v1.0

Discover where to start with the CMF. CMF Prioritization v1.0 narrows hundreds of ecolabels and standards into a focused, high-impact subset—highlighting those most relevant and widely used across projects today and in the next three years.

[Learn More](#)

Data Ecosystem

The building industry has no shortage of data—but without shared infrastructure, it can't move at the speed or scale sustainability demands. mindful MATERIALS' Data Ecosystem Report introduces Data Ecosystem v1.0—a connected, CMF-aligned framework powering verified data flow across platforms, partners, and programs.

[Learn More](#)

ALIGNING YOUR EXISTING MATERIAL DECISION-MAKING CRITERIA WITH THE CMF

04

Aligning Existing Materials Programs with the CMF

Step 1: Things to Consider When Getting Started

Step 2: Understanding the "Levels of Alignment"

Step 3: Using the Airtable Tool to Crosswalk

Step 4: Publishing and Promoting Your Program

Using the CMF to Develop Decision Making Criteria for Material Selection

These steps guide firms in aligning existing materials programs with the Common Materials Framework (CMF). By mapping your current criteria to the CMF, you can maintain the integrity of your internal approach while connecting it to a shared industry structure—making your program easier to communicate, compare, and scale.

Step 1: Things to Consider When Getting Started

Step 2: Understanding the "Levels of Alignment"

Step 3: Using the Airtable Tool to Crosswalk

Step 4: Publishing and Promoting Your Program

Aligning Existing Materials Programs with the CMF

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Step 1: Things to Consider When Getting Started

Define your approach. Start by clarifying your “why.” Decide whether your requirements apply broadly across all products or target specific categories. Umbrella requirements signal expectations across the market; category-specific ones allow deeper focus where data and maturity are strongest.

Acknowledge market variability. Start small but strategic. Data availability varies widely—some categories have robust reporting, others are still developing. Your requirements can send an important market signal, driving progress where it’s most needed.

Establish your criteria. Communicate clearly within your teams. Decide whether you’ll set baseline requirements, identify differentiators for preferred products, or both. Define what level of documentation you’ll accept—self-disclosed data, third-party verification, or certifications.

Leverage existing frameworks. Build on what works. Use the AIA Materials Pledge, LEED v5, or the Materials Pledge Reporting Guide to identify which categories to address first. Aligning with these standards supports consistency and simplifies communication.

Build relationships. Engage manufacturers, consultants, and internal champions early to strengthen your program and ensure shared understanding.

Validate and verify. Be consistent in confirming compliance. Decide whether certifications suffice or deeper data review is needed to build trust and streamline workflows.

Align your framework to the CMF. When refining an existing program, use the CMF to organize requirements by impact area and reference [CMF Prioritization v1.0](#) to ensure interoperability.

Aligning Existing Materials Programs with the CMF

Step 1: Things to Consider When Getting Started

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If you reference certifications not yet included in [CMF Prioritization v1.0](#), we'd love to hear from you. Your input helps shape future updates and ensures the CMF continues to reflect industry progress. Visit the [Airtable Tool](#) to provide your feedback.

Step 2: Understanding the 'Levels of Alignment'

There are multiple different ways any organization can align with the CMF, from high level to deeply data-driven, and a single materials program may demonstrate alignment at multiple levels. Firms, organizations, and rating systems requirements will all vary in their level of alignment with the CMF.

You can navigate through the CMF's structure and different levels and find relevant certifications associated with each level in the [Airtable Tool](#).

If you're just getting started, use the endorsement materials in your toolkit to signal your alignment with the CMF.

Signaling Your Alignment With the CMF

Level 1: Impact Level Alignment

Level 2: Sub-Impact Level Alignment

Level 3: T.A.C.O. Level Alignment

Level 4: Metric/Data Level Alignment

If you're looking to future-proof your program at the leadership level, consider aligning at the Metric/Data level.

Level 1: Impact Level Alignment

Level 1: Impact Level Alignment

Aligning At This Level Means You:

Want to know at a high level that products you’re considering are doing something toward a given impact area(s)

Accept any of the certifications referenced in this impact area within [CMF Prioritization v1.0](#) (See [Airtable Tool](#))

Note: If you are an AIA Materials Pledge Signatory, you should be aligning here at a minimum.

HOLISTIC IMPACT
ENDORSEMENT

LEVEL 1: IMPACT LEVEL
ALIGNMENT

LEVEL 2: SUB-IMPACT
LEVEL ALIGNMENT

LEVEL 3: T.A.C.O.
LEVEL ALIGNMENT

LEVEL 4: METRIC/DATA
LEVEL ALIGNMENT

CMF Impact Areas



HUMAN
HEALTH



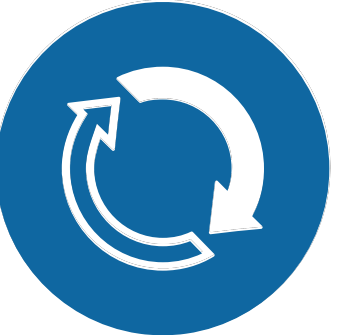
CLIMATE
HEALTH



ECOSYSTEM
HEALTH



SOCIAL HEALTH
& EQUITY



CIRCULAR
ECONOMY

These are the five broad categories of sustainability impact first defined in the AIA Materials Pledge: Human Health, Climate Health, Ecosystem Health, Social Health and Equity, and Circular Economy.

In the CMF, we often refer to these as “impact areas” because each one captures a wide range of certifications and data points. Together, they form the top-level framework for organizing and interpreting material impacts holistically.

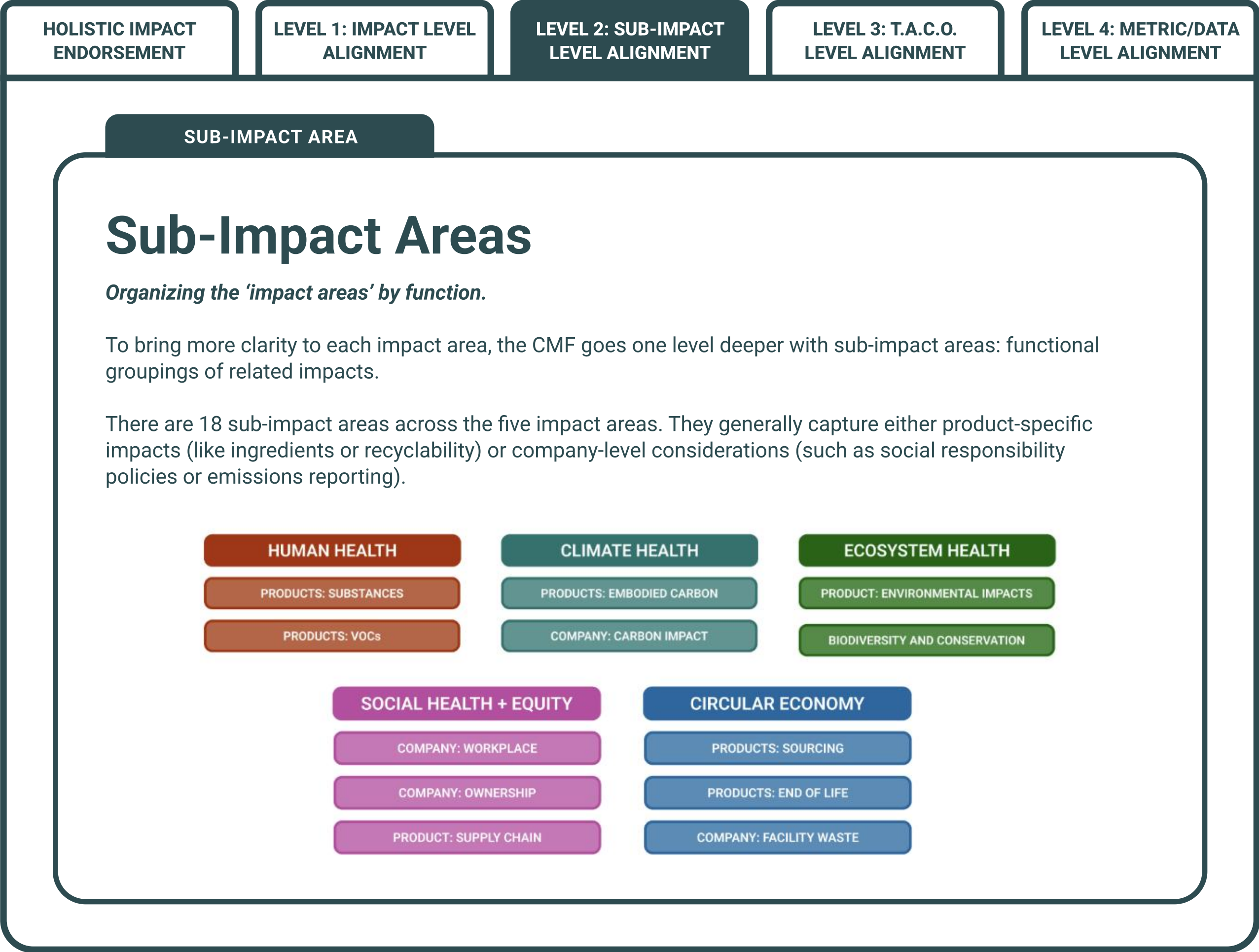
Level 2: Sub-Impact Level Alignment

Level 2: Sub-Impact Level

Aligning At This Level Means You:

Want to address a specific aspect of a given impact area in more detail

Want to emphasize compliance with certifications and ecolabels that address the sub-impact areas specifically



Level 3: T.A.C.O. Level Alignment

Level 3: T.A.C.O. Level Alignment

Aligning At This Level Means You:

Know that some certifications are more rigorous and perhaps want to prioritize those that demonstrate optimization (or reduction of impacts) versus transparency

Want to understand if products meet a particular benchmark you (or the industry) have established



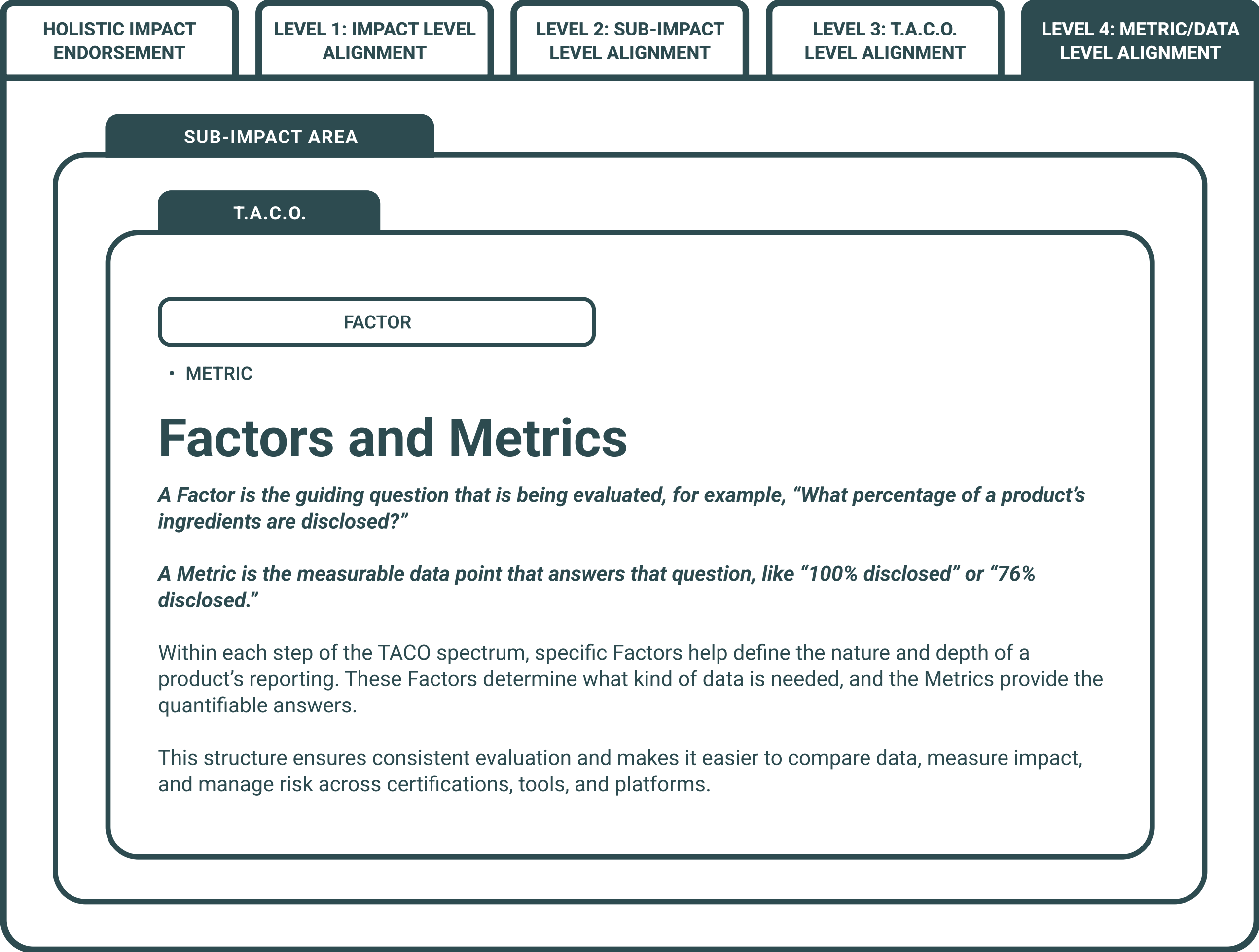
Level 4: Metric/Data Level Alignment

Level 4: Metric/Data Level Alignment

Aligning At This Level Means You:

Have set specific benchmarks or criteria for your project or program and need data to measure and track how you are doing toward those goals

Want to start generating project level impact reporting based on the products you’re using



Aligning Existing Materials Programs with the CMF

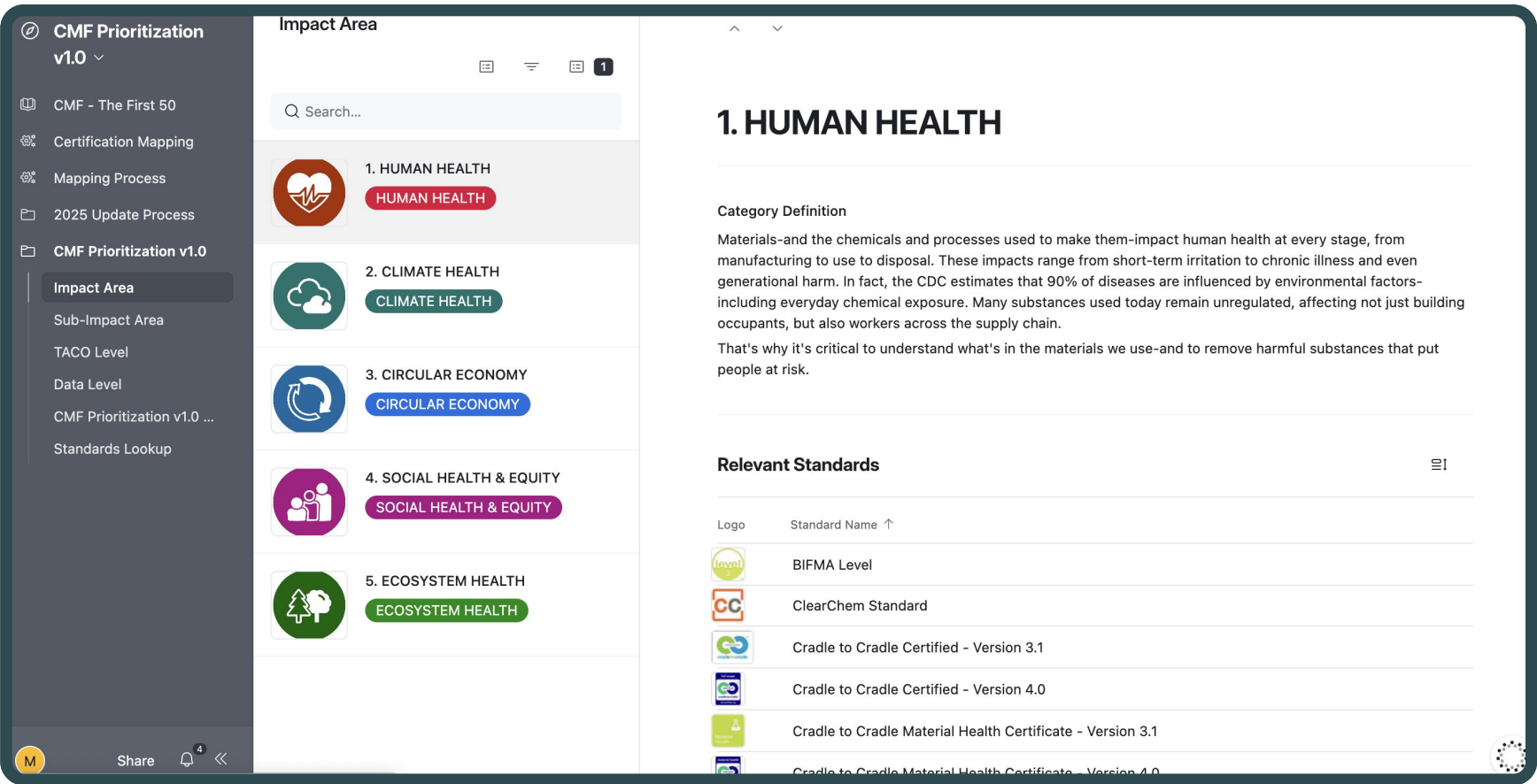
- Step 1: Things to Consider When Getting Started
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Step 3: Using the Airtable Tool to Crosswalk

To translate—or “crosswalk”—your materials program to the CMF, mindful MATERIALS has developed both high-level guidance and technical tools to make the process simple and actionable.

Ready to get started? Our interactive [Airtable Tool](#) helps mM members navigate the structure of the CMF, showing which certifications cover which factors and metrics—and where they fall within the T.A.C.O. spectrum for each sub-impact area.

Use the links below and the step-by-step instructions in this guide to crosswalk your current materials requirements with ease.



Note 1: Crosswalking has been completed between key North American green building rating systems—LEED, WELL, and the Living Building Challenge—and the CMF. Learn more about how CMF Prioritization v1.0 aligns with these programs [Airtable Tool](#).

Note 2: This effort will expand to include global rating systems in 2026 and beyond. See the [announcement](#).

Crosswalking Option 1: Standards Lookup to CMF Alignment

Use the CMF Prioritization v1.0 [Airtable Tool](#) to explore how ecolabels and standards connect to CMF impact areas. This helps you understand what’s already represented in the market, identify gaps in available data, and begin shaping clear, achievable materials requirements for your projects or firm in alignment with the [CMF Prioritization v1.0](#).

CMF Prioritization v1.0

CMF - The First 50

Certification Mapping

Mapping Process

2025 Update Process

CMF Prioritization v1.0

1: Review Your Ecolabel/ Standards in the Standards Lookup Tab

Standards Lookup

Reporting Body

Search...

full scope

CERTIFIED

cradle to cradle

chocertified.org

Cradle to Cradle Certified - Version 4.0

Cradle to Cradle Product Innovati...

Material Health

Cradle to Cradle Material Health Certificate - Version 3.1

Cradle to Cradle Product Innovati...

material health

CERTIFIED

cradle to cradle

chocertified.org

Cradle to Cradle Material Health Certificate - Version 4.0

Cradle to Cradle Product Innovati...

CRI

GREEN LABEL

PLUS

CRI Green Label Plus

The Carpet and Rug Institute

Declare

Declare Label

Living Future

Design for Freedom

Design for Freedom Self-Assessment Questionnaire

Grace Farms

Share

4

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Standards Lookup

Cradle to Cradle Material Health Certificate - Version 4.0

Standard Name / Abbreviation

C2C MH v4.0

Reporting Body

Cradle to Cradle Product Innovation Institute

Link to Methodology

-

Methodology Docs

cradle to cradle products innovation institute

MATERIAL HEALTH CERTIFICATE STANDARD, VERSION 4.0

Derived from the

CRADLE TO CRADLE CERTIFIED® VERSION 4.0 Product Standard

2: Understand Where They Appear in the CMF

Relevant Buckets, Sub-Buckets, and TACO Sections

Crosswalking Option 2: Level Alignment to Standards

Use the CMF Prioritization v1.0 [Airtable Tool](#) to organize your materials requirements by impact area and depth of alignment. Choose the impact level you want to explore, review the relevant standards, and see where stronger data connections can advance your goals and inform future project requirements.

CMF Prioritization v1.0

CMF - The First 50

CMF Prioritization v1.0

Impact Area

Sub-Impact Area

TACO Level

Data Level

CMF Prioritization v1.0 ...

Standards Lookup

Impact Area

Search...



1. HUMAN HEALTH

HUMAN HEALTH



2. CLIMATE HEALTH

CLIMATE HEALTH



3. CIRCULAR ECONOMY

CIRCULAR ECONOMY



4. SOCIAL HEALTH & EQUITY

SOCIAL HEALTH & EQUITY



5. ECOSYSTEM HEALTH

ECOSYSTEM HEALTH

1. HUMAN HEALTH

Category Definition

Materials-and the chemicals and processes used to make them-impact human health at every stage, from manufacturing to use to disposal. These impacts range from short-term irritation to chronic illness and even generational harm. In fact, the CDC estimates that 90% of diseases are influenced by environmental factors-including everyday chemical exposure. Many substances used today remain unregulated, affecting not just building occupants, but also workers across the supply chain.

That's why it's critical to understand what's in the materials we use-and to remove harmful substances that put people at risk.

Relevant Standards

Logo	Standard Name
	BIFMA Level
	ClearChem Standard
	Cradle to Cradle Certified - Version 3.1
	Cradle to Cradle Certified - Version 4.0
	Cradle to Cradle Material Health Certificate - Version 3.1
	Cradle to Cradle Material Health Certificate - Version 4.0

1: Choose Your Level of Alignment

2: Choose Your Impact Area

3: Review Relevant Ecolabel/ Standards You May Have

Option 2: Sub-Impact Area Level Alignment

1: Choose Your Sub-Impact Area

CMF - The First 50

Certification Mapping

Mapping Process

2025 Update Process

CMF Prioritization v1.0

Impact Area

Sub-Impact Area

TACO Level

Data Level

CMF Prioritization v1.0 ...

Standards Lookup

Q Search...

IMPACT AREA: HUMAN HEALTH

1.1 Substances

Product

1.2 VOCs

Product

IMPACT AREA: CLIMATE HEALTH

2.1 Embodied Carbon

Product

2.2 Company Carbon Impact

Company

IMPACT AREA: CIRCULAR ECONOMY

3.1 Sourcing

Product

3.2 End-of-Life

Product

3.3 Company Facility Waste

M

Share

4

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1.1 Substances

IMPACT AREA: HUMAN HEALTH

SUB-IMPACT AREA: Substances

Substances are defined by the EPA as any organic or inorganic substance of a particular molecular identity, including any combination of such substances occurring in whole or in part as a result of a chemical reaction or occurring in nature. The CMF includes factors in this section like: the percentage of disclosure, the granularity of disclosure (typically in parts per million or ppm), as well as by whether a product contains substances or chemicals of concern (as identified by commonly referenced restricted substance lists), or if the product has avoided the use of specific class based chemicals, among other factors.

2: Require/Request Relevant Ecolabels

Relevant Standards

Logo	Standard Name ↑
	BIFMA Level
	Cradle to Cradle Certified - Version 3.1
	Cradle to Cradle Certified - Version 4.0
	Declare Label
	Green Seal GS-11 - Paints, Coatings, Stains, and Sealers

T.A.C.O. Level Alignment

CMF Prioritization v1.0

CMF - The First 50

Certification Mapping

Mapping Process

2025 Update Process

CMF Prioritization v1.0

- Impact Area
- Sub-Impact Area
- TACO Level
- Data Level
- CMF Prioritization v1.0 ...
- Standards Lookup

TACO Level

Search...

1.1.1 Transparency

- HUMAN HEALTH
- Substances

1.1.4 Optimization

- HUMAN HEALTH
- Substances

1.2.2 Assessment

- HUMAN HEALTH
- VOCs

1.2.4 Optimization

- HUMAN HEALTH
- VOCs

2.1.1 Transparency

- CLIMATE HEALTH
- Embodied Carbon

2.1.4 Optimization

- CLIMATE HEALTH
- Embodied Carbon

M

Share

4

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1.1.4 Optimization

IMPACT AREA

- HUMAN HEALTH

SUB-IMPACT AREA

- Substances

TACO Section Name

- Optimization

1: Review Ecolabels that Are Relevant for Each

Relevant Standards

Logo

Standard Name

BIFMA Level

Cradle to Cradle Certified - Version 3.1

Cradle to Cradle Certified - Version 4.0

Declare Label

Green Seal GS-11 - Paints, Coatings, Stains, and Sealers

Greenhealth Approved Carpet

Greenhealth Approved Flooring

Greenhealth Approved Furniture

Tip: Consider Requiring Transparency but Preferring Optimization

Data Level Alignment

CMF Prioritization v1.0

CMF - The First 50

Certification Mapping

Mapping Process

2025 Update Process

CMF Prioritization v1.0

- Impact Area
- Sub-Impact Area
- TACO Level
- Data Level**
- CMF Prioritization v1.0 ...
- Standards Lookup

IMPACT AREA

3

1

Search...

IMPACT AREA: 2. CLIMATE HEALTH

- SUB-IMPACT AREA: 2.2 Company Carbon I...
 - TACO Sections: 2.2.4 Optimization

2.2.4.1 Certifications/Disclosures

IMPACT AREA: 3. CIRCULAR ECONOMY

- SUB-IMPACT AREA: 3.1 Sourcing
 - TACO Sections: 3.1.1 Transparency

3.1.1.1 Final Manufacturing Location

3.1.1.2 Regenerative & Renewable Content Percentages (%)

3.1.1.3 Reintegrated Content (%)

SUB-IMPACT AREA: 3.2 End-of-Life

- TACO Sections: 3.2.1 Transparency

3.2.1.1 End of Life Guidance Provided

3.2.1.2 Guidance Provided on Physical Product

3.1.1.2 Regenerative & Renewable Content Percentages (%)

Metrics

Metric Standards

Metric

% Certified Wood

% Biobased Content

% Unspecified Recycled Content (unspecified pre- or post-)

% Reintegrated/EPR Content

% ANSI/NSC 373 Certifie

% Salvage, Refurbished,

Recycled Content Source

Recycled Content Total

% Pre-C Recycled Content

% Post-C Recycled Content

1: Identify the Specific Data You Are Looking For

2: Use Consistent Metrics as Those Referenced in the CMF Prioritization v1.0

3: Option to Use Exact Code for a Specific Data Point

ALIGNING YOUR EXISTING MATERIAL DECISION-MAKING CRITERIA WITH THE CMF

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Expert Level Tip: Understand the Syntax

The CMF’s hierarchical structure uses a numbered syntax to represent each level. See the example below for a preview, and explore the [Airtable Tool](#) at the Data Level for a deeper dive ([tutorial](#)).

1. Human Health	Impact Level
1.1 Substances	Sub-Impact Level
1.1.1 Transparency	T.A.C.O. Level
1.1.1.1 Reporting Threshold Level	Factor Level
1.1.1.1.1 100ppm	Metric Level

Note: You’re welcome to use the specific codes provided for data endpoints in your workflows or internal systems—but it’s not required to benefit from the CMF or make better materials decisions. As the connected data ecosystem continues to develop, this shared syntax will simply make it easier to create consistent connections across certifications, databases, and workflow tools.

Aligning Existing Materials Programs with the CMF

- Step 1: Things to Consider When Getting Started
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Step 4: Publishing and Promoting Your Program

Once your material requirements are set, decide how and where to share them. Promoting your CMF alignment helps partners understand your expectations and amplifies market demand for transparency and optimization, while simultaneously accelerating a clear market signal.

Internal Only

Communicate to your design, specification, and procurement teams what they’re looking for when it comes to sustainability criteria and why. Understanding the reasoning behind the requirements goes a long way in encouraging team members to take action.

Shared With Partners

Share your requirements with partners and the mM team to amplify progress. Support collaboration by sharing resources and clarifying what’s required, requested, and “nice to have.”

Public

Consider publishing your materials requirements, as firms like [Gensler](#) and [MSR Design](#) have done. Doing so provides a clear reference for manufacturers, encourages industry-wide transparency, and inspires others to begin their own materials journey.

Tip: When publishing, it would be good to indicate the level of CMF alignment your program is current focused. If multiple levels, you could indicate level of alignment by impact area or sub impact area as well.

What's Next in Your Toolkit: The Common Give Resource

Tools for Accelerating a Common Ask/Give

Looking for step-by-step guidance on how to use the Common Ask?

We’ve created a separate resource: Supporting AEC/O: Using the Common Ask & Common Give It walks you through how to align project specifications and requests to manufacturers for their sustainability information with the CMF.

You’ll find practical examples of digital and static CMF-aligned submission options, guidance for coordinating across internal teams and external partners, and tips for helping manufacturers respond more effectively—reducing duplicative asks and saving time for all.

The only way we will enable the ability to automate materials vetting is by aligning around a clear market signal, leveraging a common language and common ask resources.



Common Materials Framework

- 01. Introduction
- 02. Adopt a Common Ask
- 03. Leverage the Common Ask
- 04. Use the Common Give
- 05. Coming Next

Supporting AEC/O: Using the Common Ask & Common Give

When it comes to requesting sustainability information from manufacturers, inconsistency leads to confusion, inefficiency, and—let’s be honest—the kind of frustration we’ve all felt when facing duplicative forms and unclear requirements. That’s exactly what the Common Ask resources were designed to solve.

Grounded in the Common Materials Framework (CMF), the Common Ask Templates provide a shared structure for collecting the product data we all need. They simplify workflows, cut down on repeat requests, and build confidence that the information being collected is consistent and usable across the industry.

Here’s how to put them to work:

By aligning around a single, open-source approach, we can simplify workflows, reduce noise, strengthen trust, and accelerate the use of sustainability data to drive impact at scale.

Adopt the Common Ask as the foundation of your material decision-making criteria.

Leverage the draft request language provided here to make your asks clear, consistent, and aligned.

[View Common Ask & Give Resource](#)

The CMF is more than a reference—it's a roadmap for action. By identifying your firm's priorities, aligning impact areas, and communicating clearly, you can cut duplication, build trust, and accelerate industry-wide progress.

Wherever you begin—broad endorsement, certification alignment, or detailed data tracking—each step strengthens the shared ecosystem and makes it easier for everyone to specify and deliver healthier, more sustainable materials.

Together, we can move from one-off requests to a coordinated approach that drives transparency, optimization, and lasting change across the built environment.