



Proof of excellence

Odebrecht is in the process of obtaining LEED certification in the United States, taking an additional step forward in its sustainable practices

written by Renata Pinheiro

Human activities are changing the composition of the Earth's atmosphere. Greenhouse gases remain in the atmosphere for periods ranging from decades to centuries. Measuring our impact on climate change is the first essential step towards achieving a more sustainable society. Keeping track of our "carbon footprint" is a simple step that can be adapted to the way we work, improving our interaction with the environment.

A "carbon footprint" is the total set of greenhouse gases (GHG) caused by an organization, event or product. For simplicity's sake, it is often represented in terms of the amount of CO₂ or its equivalent in other greenhouse gas emissions. An example of the contribution Odebrecht is making in this regard is through a partnership with Miami-Dade County in the construction of the MIA Mover. This project will

provide an alternative public transport system that is both efficient and eco-friendly, removing about 100 buses from the streets and reducing CO₂ emissions. The project's management team is working to obtain LEED Gold Certification for the MIA Mover Station. LEED stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. It is an internationally recognized certification system for buildings that minimize

environmental impacts, both during construction and in use.

The MIA Mover Automated People Mover system will be the first project in Miami-Dade County to obtain LEED Gold certification. The project includes a 2-km automated transport system that connects Miami International Airport to the Intermodal Center, which includes Miami Central Station – the hub that connects the subway, trains, buses and taxis to the airport, providing an alternative means of transportation for residents and visitors. Odebrecht is also building the AirportLink, an extension connecting the city's subway system to the Intermodal Center.

By seeking LEED certification, Odebrecht is taking an additional step toward ensuring sustainable practices in its construction projects. It involves selecting a set of guidelines to quantify the project's design and construction in terms of sustainability. The MIA Mover station was designed and is being built

using strategies that will improve its performance in areas such as energy savings, water yield and reduction of CO₂ emissions to improve internal environmental quality and preserve the planet's resources.

The project is using Renewable Energy Credits that will make up for 70% of the station's energy consumption for two years, supporting the development of renewable energy options such as wind, solar and geothermal. About 780-megawatt hours (MWh) are being negotiated, and estimates are that, as a result, the MIA Mover will prevent the emission of approximately 468 tons of CO₂ into the atmosphere.


The project's management team has also developed an educational campaign focused on the characteristics of green buildings, sustainable practices and ecological solutions. The campaign includes a program focused on a sustainable lifestyle, using the MIA Mover as an example, and is designed for students in the Miami-Dade Public School System.

Water, power and recycling

Water conservation is crucial for an LEED project. The project's team is taking a proactive approach to reducing water consumption during the life of the station. Facilities with low and zero water consumption are incorporated into the project with the goal of reducing water consumption by at least 30%. Furthermore, the design also eliminates the need for watering the grounds because the landscaping uses native plants.

The station is designed to maximize energy efficiency and cut down on the amount of electricity needed for its operation. The result is a saving of more than 15% in energy costs.

The MIA Mover project has already recycled more than 80% of all debris resulting from its construction. In addition, 20% of all materials installed at the jobsite were extracted, processed or manufactured within 800 km of the project. This initiative not only reduces the impacts associated with transportation, but is also a boost for the local economy.

"The identification and implementation of green practices that reduce carbon emissions can be easily applied to construction projects, whether or not they are seeking LEED certification," says Gilberto Neves, President and CEO of Odebrecht USA. "To combat global warming, we have to start investing in ideas that can change the way we do business, generating revenue opportunities that will help us preserve the planet for future generations," he emphasizes. 

Previous page, students from the Miami-Dade County Public School System during the campaign organized by the Odebrecht team: information on eco-solutions. Above, the MIA Mover project



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