



VGBC | Vietnam Green
Building Council
Hội đồng Công trình xanh Việt Nam®

LOTUS Accredited Professionals Framework 2016



Vietnam Green Building Council

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1.0 Introduction

The LOTUS Accredited Professional (AP) program provides advanced training and accreditation from the Vietnam Green Building Council (VGBC) to green building professionals including architects, engineers, consultants, product designers, sales staff and real estate agents. This program aims to increase the technical skills of professionals, encourage the best practice in consultancy and advice, and enable professionals' career development opportunities within the field of green building. This program allows an accredited professional to prepare submissions for the LOTUS green building certification system administered by the VGBC.

The LOTUS AP Framework 2016 sets the governing principles for the LOTUS AP Program and prescribes the requirements for:

- Initial training and accreditation;
- Operating as a LOTUS AP;
- Renewing accreditation;
- The LOTUS Fellow Program; and
- The LOTUS AP Awards.

The LOTUS AP Framework is effective from **1 March 2016**.

1.1 What is a LOTUS AP?

A LOTUS AP is a professional who has undergone specific training in the LOTUS green building certification system. A LOTUS AP holds an accreditation for a **two year period** based on this training and accreditation can be renewed in accordance with this Framework. A LOTUS AP can provide consultancy advice when designing green buildings and applying for certification under the LOTUS system.

1.2 Why should I become a LOTUS AP?

Holding a LOTUS AP accreditation demonstrates to clients and employers that you have specific skills in relation to green building. This certification may set you ahead of other competitors and continue to grow your business.

Becoming a LOTUS AP can provide you with career benefits by:

- Developing your understanding for the effective implementation of LOTUS certification tools on a variety of projects;
- Gaining an essential knowledge for the support of design and construction teams;

- Having the opportunity to exchange ideas and knowledge with fellow professionals; and
- Gaining additional personal exposure and promotion through the VGBC within the Vietnam Green Building Database and other promotional material.

1.3 How to become a LOTUS AP

This Framework sets out the process for becoming a LOTUS AP as well as the requirements for maintaining accreditation.

1.4 VGBC Contacts

Relevant information will be presented on the VGBC website www.vgbc.org.vn for professionals considering the LOTUS Accredited Professionals Program, as well as information for existing LOTUS APs. Prospective candidates and existing LOTUS APs are encouraged to contact the VGBC via email (education@vgbc.org.au) or phone (+84) 4 3629 1107 if they require any additional information or clarification.

2.0 Training and Accreditation

In order to become a LOTUS AP, professionals must undertake a LOTUS AP training course and pass the LOTUS AP Exam. The Certificate of Accreditation will be issued by VGBC.

2.1 LOTUS AP Training Courses

There are three types of training courses that a LOTUS AP candidate can choose to undertake:

- Two-day Course (face-to-face learning);
- E-Learning (online directed study) (to be available late 2016); and
- Self-directed Learning (independent study) (to be available mid 2016).

2.1.1 Two-day Course

Organized by VGBC, these courses offer interactive learning, with qualified professionals walking participants through the learning material. Two-day courses provide opportunities for participants to ask questions, perform calculations, and learn the LOTUS AP material in a supervised and structured environment.

Please refer to the VGBC website for all upcoming courses.

Fees and Conditions

Two-day Courses provided by VGBC have a fee of **VND 8,500,000 per participant**. Discount policies for VGBC members and batch registration apply.

2.1.2 E-Learning Portal

E-Learning offers an interactive, self-directed study option. Candidates will be given log-in details for the E-Learning Portal on the VGBC website.

The E-Learning Portal is expected to be available late-2016. The launch of this program will be advertised on the VGBC website.

E-Learning Portal Providers

VGBC is the only provider of the E-Learning LOTUS AP Training Course.

Fees and Conditions

The fee for the E-Learning Portal will be announced prior to the launch of this Training Course. This fee is inclusive of all downloadable study material provided through the portal. Purchase for a course on E-Learning Portal is valid for 12 months.

2.1.3 Self-directed Learning

Self-directed Learning will be available in mid 2016. Registered learners will be able to download the latest LOTUS Technical Manuals, a LOTUS AP Study Guide and a set of sample exam questions.

Fees and Conditions

The fee for Self-directed Learning is **VND 1,000,000 per participant**. Any study material downloaded remains the intellectual property of VGBC. Any candidate or LOTUS AP found to be reproducing this material will be in direct breach of the LOTUS AP Code of Conduct (See Section 4.0).

Candidates will have up to **12 months** to complete the Self-directed Learning Course.

2.2 LOTUS AP Exam

Exam Overview

The LOTUS AP Exam is administered by VGBC. Candidates can sit the LOTUS AP **Exam online** after completing one of the LOTUS AP Training Courses.

The LOTUS AP Exam will cover material from the LOTUS AP Training Course to ensure that all professionals can adequately administer the LOTUS certification program. Exam material will cover calculations, submission requirements, and understanding of the intent of credits.

Assessment and Grading

The LOTUS AP exam is graded automatically by the VGBC. The candidate must achieve a mark of **75%** or higher in order to pass the LOTUS AP exam.

Failing the Exam

If the pass mark of 75% is not achieved on the first exam attempt, **the candidate can re-sit the exam once with no additional fee.**

2.3 Accreditation

Following successful completion of a LOTUS AP Training Course and successful attempt at the LOTUS AP Exam, the candidate will be issued a LOTUS AP Certificate of Accreditation. The Certificate of **Accreditation is valid for two (2) years from the date of issue.**

When the Certificate of Accreditation is issued, the LOTUS AP will be automatically listed on the VGBC Green Database – the largest online network of green building products and professionals in Vietnam.

3.0 LOTUS AP Code of Conduct

All accredited professionals must abide by the following Code of Conduct. Breaches of this code may result in warnings and reprimands, restrictions on accreditation or loss of accreditation in entirety. Breaches of this Code must be reported to the VGBC immediately. These instances will be passed on to the LOTUS AP Committee to be assessed and penalised where necessary.

3.1 Training

- 1. Training Courses:** All candidates must act in a professional manner during training. If a candidate is attending a face-to-face training course, they must respect the course presenter(s) and other participants. Candidates must not be intoxicated or under the influence of any drugs during the training session. Improper conduct, such as disrespecting course presenters, disrespecting other participants, leaving the workshop for extended periods, not participating in exercises, or being intoxicated, may result in the candidate being removed from the training course. If a candidate is removed, they will forfeit their course fees and will not receive a training certificate.
- 2. E-Learning and Online Material:** Candidates participating in E-Learning or Self-directed Learning must act in a professional manner whilst studying. All course material remains the property of the VGBC. A candidate may not copy or distribute course material. If a candidate is found to have copied or distributed course material, they will be prohibited from continuing E-Learning or Self-directed Learning, they will forfeit their course fees and will not receive a completion certificate.
- 3. Examination:** All candidates must undertake the exam under examination conditions. No assistance is allowed from other professionals, including existing APs. All exam answers submitted must be the candidate's own work. If the candidate is found to be cheating on the examination, the exam result will be an automatic fail and the exam fees will be forfeited. If a candidate is found to be cheating on an exam after accreditation has been awarded, the candidate will be stripped of their accreditation and required to retake the exam under supervision of the VGBC.

3.2 Professional Practice

- 1. Compliance:** The accredited professional agrees that they will adhere to the rules and regulations stipulated by the VGBC regarding accreditation, as well as operate within the framework of the law of Vietnam. Breach of VGBC policy will result in one warning. After one warning, if the breach continues the professional will be stripped of their accreditation for up to two years at the discretion of the VGBC. Any breaches of Vietnam law will be

reported to the relevant authorities without warning. If an accredited professional is found to have broken the law, they will be stripped of their accreditation.

2. **Ethical Behaviour:** The accredited professional agrees that they will always act in an ethical manner. This involves providing correct and lawful advice to clients, to the VGBC and to the public. If an accredited professional is found to be acting in an unethical manner, they will be reported to the VGBC ethics panel for review. Depending on the severity of the behaviour and previous practices, the panel may issue a warning, suspend accreditation for up to two years, or be stripped of accreditation. In extreme circumstances, a professional may be prohibited from regaining accreditation permanently. Unethical behaviour includes the following:
 - a. Presenting inaccurate information on a certification application
 - b. Acting without the authority of the building/land owner
 - c. Deceiving the VGBC, an employer or a client
 - d. Receiving a bribe or compensation for acting unprofessionally
 - e. Publically bringing the VGBC into disrepute or defaming the VGBC
3. **Reporting of Unethical Behaviour or Non-Compliance:** Accredited professionals must understand that it is their duty and obligation to report illegal or unethical activities or behaviour. Failure to do so will result in the professional being held accountable and facing a warning or for repeat behaviour a suspension of accreditation for up to two years.

3.3 Acknowledgement and Acceptance of the Code of Conduct

All LOTUS APs must sign the agreement at Attachment 1 which acknowledges that they understand the Code of Conduct and agree to abide by it at all times.

4.0 Renewing LOTUS AP Certificate

The LOTUS AP Certificate of Accreditation is valid for two (2) years from the date of issue. This certificate must be renewed in order to maintain LOTUS AP status. In order to renew the certificate, LOTUS APs must complete a **minimum total of 20 Points of Continuing Professional Development (CPD)**.

4.1 Continuing Professional Development Program

The CPD Program has been introduced into the LOTUS AP Framework to ensure that LOTUS APs remain up to date with the latest LOTUS certification tools, connected with the green building industry, and continue to grow their technical skill set.

Table 1: Continuing Professional Development

Reference	CPD Type	CPD Points	Points limit
Involvement in a LOTUS project as the Applicant Representative			
1.1	Register a LOTUS project	5	15
1.2	Completed Provisional certification of a LOTUS project	10	20
1.3	Completed Full certification of a LOTUS project	10	20
Involvement in a LOTUS project			
2.1	Be part of the project team on a LOTUS certified project.	5	15
2.2	Prepare submission documents on a LOTUS certified project	5	15
Participation in education programs			
3.1	Retake the LOTUS AP Exam to stay up to date with any changes to the LOTUS certification system.	15	15
3.2	Undertake workshops or self-study units on LOTUS Tools (NR, MFR, BIO, Homes, or other tools to be developed by VGBC in the future)	5	10
3.3	Undertake an E-Learning course related to Green Buildings	1-5	10
Attend events on Green Buildings			
4.1	Attend VGBC Annual Conference	3	6
4.2	Attend a technical or professional workshop or seminar organized by VGBC to grow your technical skills.	3	12
4.3	Attend an alternative green building workshop or seminar	1	5

Reference	CPD Type	CPD Points	Points limit
Contribute to VGBC activities			
5.1	Regional Co-ordinator for one year	10	10
5.2	Teach a training course organized by VGBC	10	20
5.3	Presentation at a VGBC event	10	20
5.4	Member of VGBC Board or Committees for one year	5	10
Contribute to LOTUS development			
6.1	Provide voluntary feedback on LOTUS systems	2	6
6.2	Respond to consultations on LOTUS systems development	3	12
Lecture and Presentations			
7.1	Teach a green building related course at university or higher education institutions	5	10
7.2	Presentation at an alternative green building workshop or seminar	5	10
Research			
8	Publish articles to promote understanding of green building	5	10

The LOTUS AP must provide VGBC with evidence of course completion or event participation. All CPD points will be subject to VGBC's approval.

4.2 Accreditation Renewal

LOTUS APs must submit evidence of completion of 20 Points of CPD within one (1) month after the expiration of the certificate by completing the document in Attachment 2.

VGBC will issue a new Certificate of Accreditation within two (2) weeks of receiving all the correct documentation. The new certificate will be valid for two years from the date of issue.

There is no charge for the renewal of accreditation.

4.3 Late Renewal

4.3.1 Renewal Application within 12 Months of Expiry

Late renewal application (after the above-stated deadline) but within 12 months of the expiration of the certification will still be accepted. However, the LOTUS AP must achieve an additional 10 CPD points, for a total of 30 points for late renewal.

4.3.2 Renewal Application greater than 12 Months of Expiry

If an accreditation has lapsed for more than twelve months, the professional must re-take the LOTUS AP Training Course and LOTUS AP Exam prior to renewing their certification.

5.0 LOTUS Fellow Program

The LOTUS Fellow Program aims to recognise continued and advanced commitment to the LOTUS AP program. This program will reward distinguished individuals that have gone above and beyond in their professional practice as a LOTUS AP. LOTUS AP Fellows will be announced and presented with their Certificate of Appreciation at the VGBC Annual Conference or Awards Dinner.

5.1 LOTUS Fellow Attributes

A LOTUS Fellow will display and practice the following attributes:

- Highest level of dedication to the LOTUS system through development and implementation of the green building rating tool;
- Highest level of professional integrity and ongoing support for green building as a LOTUS AP; and
- Ongoing support for the VGBC in the development of LOTUS tools, education and training, and the LOTUS AP Program.

5.2 LOTUS Fellow Selection Process

A prospective LOTUS Fellow is an AP that displays the LOTUS Fellow Attributes in their daily practice as a LOTUS AP. In order to receive recognition as a LOTUS Fellow, an AP must meet the minimum eligibility requirements, submit a nomination to the VGBC and then be selected by the LOTUS Fellow Committee. Meeting the minimum requirements for the LOTUS Fellow program does not automatically gain the award. A maximum of three LOTUS Fellows will be awarded each calendar year.

It is likely that the VGBC will award 1-3 LOTUS Fellows per year, ongoing. There may be some years where there are no eligible APs, no nominations received, or no nominations that the committee deems suitable for the award of LOTUS Fellow.

5.2.1 LOTUS Fellow Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible to be recognised as a LOTUS Fellow, a LOTUS AP must meet the following requirements:

- 5 years active service as a LOTUS AP: Nomination application must describe the type of industry involvement of the LOTUS AP and demonstrate activity for at least 5 years.

OR

- Contribution to 5 LOTUS registered projects: Nomination application must state which projects the LOTUS AP has been involved with and how they contributed to the success of each project.

OR

- Service to the VGBC and LOTUS systems: Nomination applications must describe the involvement of the LOTUS AP in the VGBC. This includes contributing to the development of LOTUS tools, education courses.

5.2.2 Nomination Process

An AP will be required to put in a nomination application for LOTUS Fellow. This nomination can be placed by the AP or by another AP or by the AP's employer. In special cases, the VGBC may nominate an AP for LOTUS Fellow. The nomination will need to address the minimum eligibility requirements as well as how the AP meets the attributes of the LOTUS Fellow Program. If LOTUS Fellow status is awarded, the application information will be printed in the Annual Conference or Awards Ceremony Program in which the Fellow is presented.

5.2.3 LOTUS Fellow Committee

Nomination applications will be assessed by the LOTUS Fellow Committee. The committee will be made up on the VGBC Executive Director, one member of the VGBC Board of Directors, and one VGBC staff member. The committee will evaluate nomination applications and select to award LOTUS Fellow status or not. The committee will prepare a written evaluation of each nomination based on the following areas:

- LOTUS registered projects that the AP has been involved in;
- Years of service and level of activity;
- VGBC service including promotion of LOTUS systems, development of LOTUS systems and training and education;
- Overall commitment and contribution to the LOTUS AP Program; and
- Consistency with the LOTUS Fellow Attributes.

5.3 LOTUS Fellow Benefits

All LOTUS Fellows will receive a Certificate of Appreciation, presented at the VGBC Annual Conference and will be able to use the title LOTUS Fellow.

As a LOTUS Fellow, the AP will be recognised as a lifetime member of the VGBC (individual membership) with a profile listed on the VGBC website.

The VGBC may also ask LOTUS Fellows to speak at various conferences, workshops and seminars relating to green building certification and to share their ideas and experiences on the LOTUS system.

6.0 LOTUS AP Awards Program

VGBC is introducing the LOTUS AP Awards Program to reward APs who have excelled in their service to VGBC.

The “Highest Contribution” award will be presented to the LOTUS AP with the most number of registered projects in a calendar year. All projects must be registered prior to December 31 in that year to be counted towards this award.

7.0 Existing LOTUS APs – Transitional Arrangements

The LOTUS AP Framework will come into effect from 1 March 2016. Specific transitional arrangements will be made for existing LOTUS APs.

All existing APs must contact the VGBC in accordance with the requirements below to confirm the new term of their accreditation and to be issued an updated Certificate of Accreditation.

7.1 Accreditation expiring prior to 30 June 2016

Existing LOTUS APs whose accreditation has lapsed will get an automatic (1) one-year extension of their certificate. APs whose accreditation expires prior to 30 June 2016 will get an automatic (1) year automatic extension of their certificate. Both cases must complete 10 points of CPD before the end of their extension.

7.2 Accreditation expiring between 1 July 2016 and 28 February 2017

Existing LOTUS APs with accreditation set to expire between 1 July 2016 and 28 February 2017 get an automatic one (1) year extension. APs must complete 15 points of CPD before the end of their extension.

7.3 Accreditation expiring on or after 1 March 2017

Existing LOTUS APs with accreditation set to expire after 1 March 2017 will get an automatic one (1) year extension for their certificate. APs must complete 20 points of CPD before the end of the extension.

7.4 All existing LOTUS APs

Any of the above may retake the LOTUS AP exam in lieu of the required CPD points. The exam is free of charge. APs will only receive one attempt at the exam. If an existing AP does not meet the 75% pass mark for the exam on this attempt, they will be required to complete the requisite points of CPD before their expiry of any extension or register for the LOTUS AP Training Course (fee applies).

8.0 Right to Review

The VGBC retains the right to review all LOTUS AP requirements and framework on a periodic basis and make changes as deemed necessary. All changes will be communicated to LOTUS APs in a timely fashion so as to allow sufficient time to prepare.

ATTACHMENT 1

Acknowledgement and Acceptance of Code of Conduct

I _____ (FULL NAME) have read and understood the LOTUS AP Code of Conduct set out in Section 3.0 of the LOTUS AP Framework. I agree to always act in accordance with the Code.

_____ (SIGNATURE)

_____ (FULL NAME)

_____ (DATE)

Official Use Only

LOTUS AP# _____

VGBC ACCEPTANCE _____ (Staff Signature)

DATE _____

