

An aerial photograph of a modern building with a courtyard. The building has a grey facade with numerous orange vertical slats. The courtyard is paved with light-colored tiles and features several small trees, benches, and tables. A river flows through the background, and another building is visible in the distance.

THE Sustainable
SITES
Initiative®

GBCI

Green Business Certification Inc.
**Public Relations
Guidelines**

For The Sustainable SITES Initiative

Updated Fall 2023

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SITES Certified Mary Elizabeth Branch Park | Austin, TX
Photo Credit: © Brandon Huttenlocher / Design Workshop, Inc.

Public Relations Guidelines for SITES Certification

Congratulations! You are joining an innovative community dedicated to elevating the economic, social and environmental benefits of landscapes. Administered by Green Business Certification Inc. (GBCI), the Sustainable SITES Initiative (SITES) promotes sustainable and resilient landscape development. SITES can be used for development projects located on sites with or without buildings to enhance their sustainability, implement nature-based solutions and improve resilience. The program offers several ways to pursue sustainable landscape development, including SITES precertification and certification, along with earning a SITES Accredited Professional credential.

Talking about SITES

SITES Certification

SITES certification provides a comprehensive framework for designing, developing and managing sustainable and resilient landscapes.

SITES supports landscape architects, planners and others in implementing nature-based solutions. SITES projects enhance biodiversity and mitigate climate change, while conserving resources, improving public health and protecting critical ecosystems.

SITES Precertification

Precertification is an optional, incremental review pathway for registered projects. It offers early recognition for projects in the planning phase, demonstrating their commitment to achieving SITES certification, and its ensuing impact on site sustainability and resilience.

Below are resources to help you spread the word about your achievement.

Use your certification mark, certificate, and plaque

Certified projects will receive a digital certification mark file, which can be added to your website and marketing resources. If you do not receive your mark upon certification, email marketing@gbci.org. Plaques and certificates can be ordered through [Green Plaque](#) to promote your achievement on-site.

Please note, precertified projects do not have certification marks or plaques, as it is a stepping stone to full certification. They do have access to certificates via Green Plaque.



SITES Certified Grant Park Gateway | Atlanta, GA | Photo Credit: © Dorian Sky

Distribute a press release

Once you have achieved SITES certification, please feel free to share the news! A press release template, sample quotes from GBCI, and other resources can be found in these guidelines. GBCI staff are also available to review your draft and share the corresponding SITES logo to use in your release. Please email marketing@gbci.org with any questions.

Hold a certification ceremony

Plaque ceremonies are a great way to celebrate your achievement and showcase your projects to stakeholders and the media. Start by finding a GBCI representative to speak or present a plaque for a SITES certification ceremony. Complete a [speaker request form](#) and a member of our staff will follow up with you. For questions about ordering certification plaques, please email marketing@gbci.org.

Submit a project profile

Certified projects are featured on our [SITES project profile database](#), which is an excellent opportunity to share your work, high-resolution photos of your project and a testimonial from your project team. If you are interested in having your project featured on this page, all you need to do is fill out the [profile submission form](#). However, if you submitted a case study, we may use that information to create a first draft based on that information to get started. Just let us know how you move forward by emailing marketing@gbci.org.

SITES Certified Kirke Park | Seattle, WA | Photo Credit: © Stuart Isett



Be social

Promote your achievement on social, and tag SITES' [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [LinkedIn](#) handles. If you have any photos of your project or links to news/announcements to share, please let us know and we can promote these to our audiences. Here are some sample tweets to get your started:



Your Company @yourcompany

We're proud to showcase our new @SITEScertified [PROJECT], which promotes healthy ecosystems, improves our community's resilience and supports public health. [LINK]

[PHOTO]

Sustainability and health are a top priority at [COMPANY]. That's why we're proud to announce our new @SITEScertified [PROJECT NAME], which strengthens our community's ecosystem and public health. [LINK] [PHOTO]

[COMPANY] is committed to creating sustainable, resilient spaces. That's why we're proud to announce that [PROJECT] is @SITEScertified for its green infrastructure, including [FEATURE]. [LINK] [PHOTO]



Additionally, you can [subscribe to both GBCI and SITES](#) for email updates. Learn about important program updates, upcoming events, and sustainability news. We feature a project each month in the SITES newsletter – once you fill out a project profile, yours will be eligible for this slot, as well.

Share an article

Interested in sharing more about your story? Submit an article to marketing@gbci.org for consideration to publish on the [SITES](#) and [GBCI](#) websites. GBCI staff will review the content, work with you to finalize and then promote on SITES' channels.

Branding Guidelines

GBCI Name

The official organization name is Green Business Certification Inc.™ and GBCI® is the official acronym. GBCI can be used after the first reference. Do not use articles like “the” or “a” when using GBCI as a noun or in the possessive.

SITES rating system

The Sustainable SITES Initiative® is a registered trademark of Green Business Certification Inc. and should be fully spelled out when referred to for the first time. SITES® is acceptable for the second reference.

Follow all guidance detailed in the [GBCI Trademark Policy & Brand Guidelines](#), and contact marketing@gbci.org with any questions about branding or use of the trademark and logo.

Certification levels

There are five levels of SITES certification – Precertified, Certified, Silver, Gold and Platinum. When a project achieves certification, it should be referred to as a SITES-certified project. Similarly, a project that achieves precertification is “SITES-precertified,” or can be referred to as “SITES Precertified Project X.” If appropriate, supporting text may be written that gives additional detail about the specific rating system under which the project was certified. Do not use the SITES certification marks in connection with SITES-registered projects.

- » “SITES certification” with lowercase “c” is used to describe the certification process.
- » “SITES-certified” with lowercase “c” is used to describe a project that has been certified.
- » “SITES Certified” with capital “C” (and no hyphen) is used to describe a project that has been certified to the base level: Certified.

When a project is certified, the correct wording is “project ‘X’ is SITES Silver” or “project ‘X’ is SITES certified to the Silver level” or “project ‘X’ is SITES Silver certified.” Due to repetition, the wording “project ‘X’ is SITES Certified certified” is not recommended. “Certified” to reference both certification and level is sufficient.

Sample Press Release – Certification, Precertification and Recertification

[ORGANIZATION/PROJECT NAME] Awarded SITES [LEVEL] [PRE/RE]Certification for Achievement in Landscape Sustainability

[COMPANY] Works to Improve Resilience and Community Health through Landscape Development

CITY, State – DATE – Today, [ORGANIZATION] announced [it/name of project] was awarded [LEVEL] [PRE/RE]certification under the Sustainable SITES Initiative (SITES) rating system. Administered by Green Business Certification Inc. (GBCI), SITES promotes sustainable and resilient landscape development to enhance sustainability, implement green infrastructure strategies and improve resilience.

[Insert details about the project]

[Quote about the project]

Discuss the strategies used in the various aspects of SITES certification:

- » Long-term commitment to landscape sustainability
- » Plant, garden, tree selection and transformation from previous space
- » Benefits for the community and public health
- » Water and energy savings
- » Innovative aspects of your project and use of best practices for land development

[Quote from GBCI - see samples below]

Any landscape—whether the site of a large subdivision, a shopping mall, a park, an office building or even a home—holds the potential both to improve and to regenerate the natural benefits and services provided by ecosystems in their undeveloped state. These benefits—such as supply and regulation of clean air and water, provision of food and renewable resources and decomposition of waste—are essential to the health and wellbeing of humans and all other life on the planet. Through [PROJECT]’s SITES certification, they elevate the value of this space to become more sustainable, resilient and healthy.

About Green Business Certification Inc. (GBCI)

GBCI is the world’s leading sustainability and health certification and credentialing body, independently recognizing excellence in performance and practice globally while promoting adoption of building and business practices that continually and measurably improve health, equity, resilience and environmental wellbeing for all. GBCI administers project certifications and professional credentials and certificates including, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design ([LEED](#)) green building rating systems, as well as the [PEER](#) standard for power systems, the [WELL Building Standard](#), the Sustainable SITES Initiative ([SITES](#)), [EDGE](#) (Excellence in Design for Greater Efficiencies), [TRUE](#) certification for zero waste and Investor Confidence Project ([ICP](#)) for energy efficiency retrofits.

Sample Quotes from GBCI

You are welcome to use a quote from GBCI in your press release. Here are a few samples. If you would like to seek approval on an alternative quote, please contact our communications department at marketing@gbci.org.

“To realize the benefits of healthy ecosystems, we must prioritize sustainable, resilient development by integrating nature back into cities,” said Peter Templeton, President and CEO, U.S. Green Building Council and GBCI. “Through their SITES certification, [COMPANY] is showing their commitment to sustainability by bringing the importance of green infrastructure and ecosystem services to the forefront of decision-making.”

“[Company] recognizes that landscapes are not merely beautiful, passive features, but living systems that serve as the world’s natural infrastructure,” said Peter Templeton, President and CEO, U.S. Green Building Council and GBCI. “With SITES, we can build, quite literally, the future we aspire to with approaches that conserve and enhance the land on which we depend, protect our communities from disaster and improve human health.”

“Sustainable landscapes are essential to the well-being of all life,” said Peter Templeton, President and CEO, U.S. Green Building Council and GBCI. “These landscapes reduce water demand, filter and reduce stormwater runoff, provide wildlife habitat, reduce urban heat islands, improve air quality and human health and increase outdoor recreation opportunities – access to which remain critical during times like these. With their SITES certification, [COMPANY] demonstrates an acknowledgement of this reality, and a commitment to improving spaces for their community.”

SITES Accredited Professionals

In earning your SITES AP credential, you have demonstrated your knowledge of the profession of sustainable landscape design and development, and the expertise to implement the SITES rating system. Now, you’re joining a community of sustainable landscape developers of multiple backgrounds. Below are a few ways to share the news of your credential and get the most out of your efforts.

Talk about your SITES AP credential

The SITES AP credential establishes a common framework to define an individual’s knowledge in creating sustainable and resilient landscapes and other outdoor spaces. SITES APs demonstrate the skills necessary to support the SITES certification process, including participating in the design and development process, supporting and encouraging the integrative design process, managing the application and certification process, and providing advocacy and education for the adoption of SITES.

By supporting the SITES certification system, SITES APs help ensure landscapes and places implement nature-based solutions to climate change, conserve resources, create regenerative systems, foster resiliency, and enhance human well-being. SITES APs are critical to educating clients, colleagues and the community about the essential role that SITES plays in protecting and restoring the environment and the community.



SITES Certified Woodland Discovery Playground | Memphis, TN
Photo Credit: © Courtesy of James Corner Field Operations

Trademarks

New SITES® APs will receive an email which provides our water to be used to advertise your new credential. Add it to your email signature and make note of it on your LinkedIn. If you have not received an email, reach out to us at sites@gbci.org.

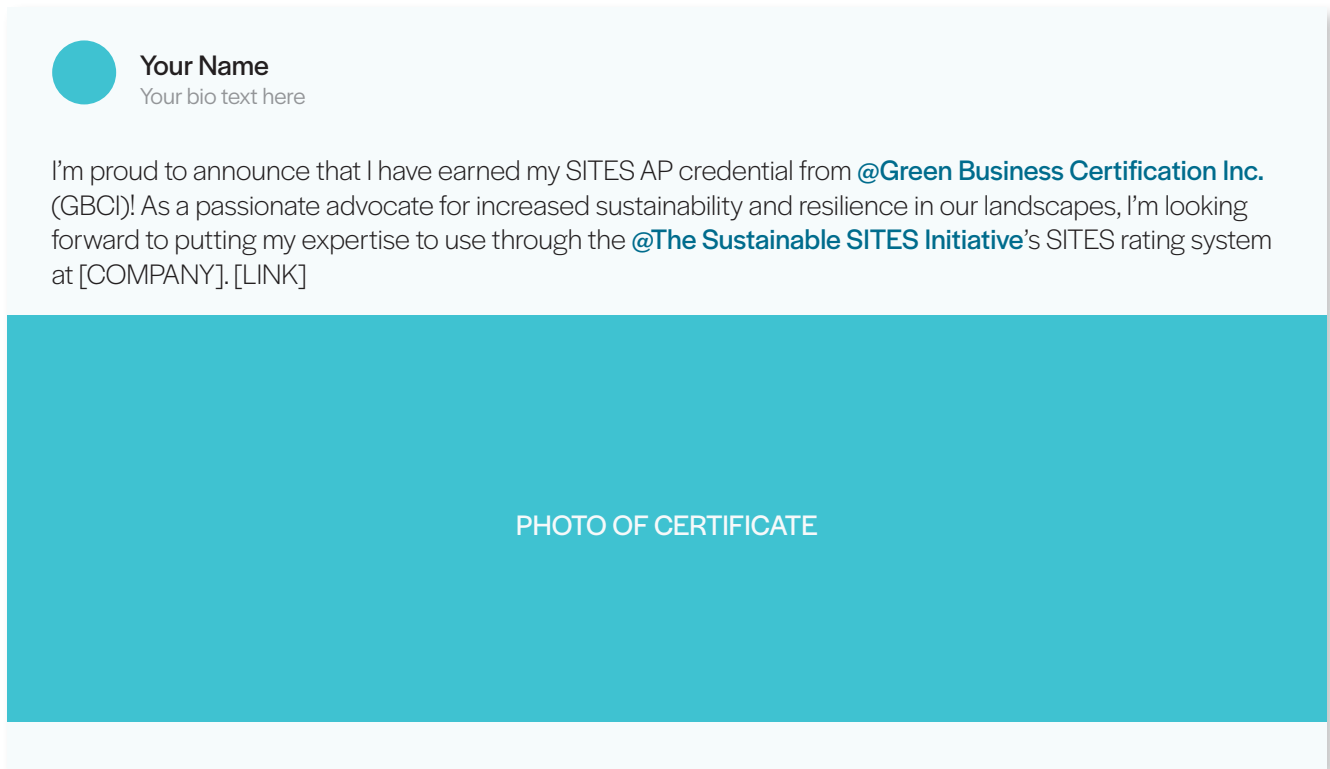
» Follow all guidance detailed in the [GBCI Trademark Policy & Brand Guidelines](#) when using your SITES AP trademark, and contact marketing@gbci.org with any questions about branding or use of the trademark and logo.

Share your news on social

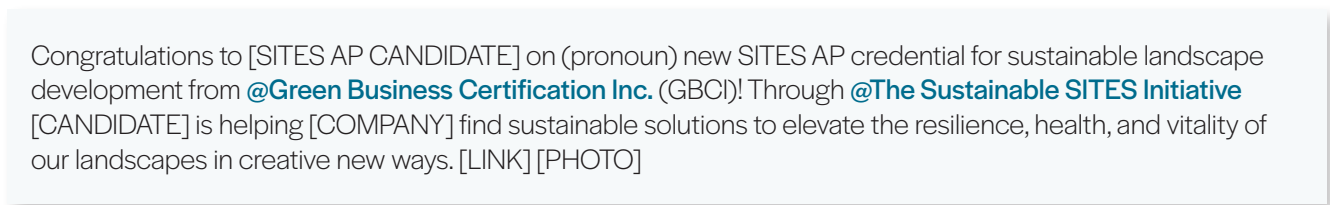
Follow SITES on social media to get the latest updates on sustainable landscapes, including SITES' Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

Post your certificate on LinkedIn and be sure to tag @The Sustainable SITES Initiative so we can share your good news.

Personal sample text for LinkedIn:

A sample LinkedIn post layout. At the top left is a teal circular profile picture placeholder. To its right is the text "Your Name" in bold, with "Your bio text here" underneath. Below this is a paragraph of text: "I'm proud to announce that I have earned my SITES AP credential from @Green Business Certification Inc. (GBCI)! As a passionate advocate for increased sustainability and resilience in our landscapes, I'm looking forward to putting my expertise to use through the @The Sustainable SITES Initiative's SITES rating system at [COMPANY]. [LINK]". Below the text is a large teal rectangular area with the white text "PHOTO OF CERTIFICATE" centered inside. The entire post is set against a light blue background with a subtle drop shadow.

Company-based sample text for LinkedIn:

A sample LinkedIn post layout for a company. It consists of a single paragraph of text: "Congratulations to [SITES AP CANDIDATE] on (pronoun) new SITES AP credential for sustainable landscape development from @Green Business Certification Inc. (GBCI)! Through @The Sustainable SITES Initiative [CANDIDATE] is helping [COMPANY] find sustainable solutions to elevate the resilience, health, and vitality of our landscapes in creative new ways. [LINK] [PHOTO]". The text is set against a light blue background with a subtle drop shadow.

Create your profile in the SITES Directory

Create your SITES AP profile on our website. This is a great way to ensure that your local landscape development community can contact you for assistance. Then share the opportunity with others in your network.

Sample press release – SITES Accredited Professional

[NAME] of [FIRM] Earns SITES Professional Credential from Green Business Certification Inc.

CITY, State – DATE – [NAME(S), TITLE (S)] of [COMPANY] has earned the SITES Accredited Professional (SITES AP) credential through Green Building Certification Inc. (GBCI), placing [HIM/HER/THEM] among an elite group of leading professionals who are dedicated to enhancing landscape sustainability, implementing nature-based solutions and improving resilience.

The SITES AP establishes a common framework to define the profession of sustainable landscape design and development. As a SITES AP, [NAME(s)] demonstrate their knowledge, expertise, and commitment to the profession. SITES APs possess the knowledge and skills necessary to support the SITES certification process for sustainable landscape development. By supporting the SITES certification system, SITES APs help ensure landscapes and places implement nature-based solutions to climate change, conserve resources, create regenerative systems, foster resiliency, and enhance human well-being. SITES APs are critical to educating clients, colleagues and the community about the essential role that SITES plays in protecting and restoring the environment and the community.

[Quote from Organization]

[Discuss how/why organization will utilize SITES APs and/or SITES rating system]

[Optional Quote from GBCI:]

“To realize the benefits of healthy ecosystems, we must prioritize sustainable, resilient development by integrating nature back into cities,” said Peter Templeton, President and CEO, U.S. Green Building Council and GBCI. “By earning their SITES AP credential, [NAME] is showing their commitment to sustainability by investing in green infrastructure expertise and bringing it to the forefront of their very livelihood.”

SITES-certified development projects elevate the value of outdoor space to become more sustainable, resilient and healthy. SITES fills an important gap in the marketplace by offering a comprehensive, well-vetted framework for sustainable land development. Because while every building has a landscape, not every landscape has a building.

About GBCI Professional Credentials

The SITES AP program is one of several professional credentials administered through GBCI, which uses rigorous test development best practices to assess whether professionals have the minimum competencies to perform their jobs. In addition to SITES, GBCI also administers the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Associate credential, the LEED AP with specialty credentials, the WELL AP credential, the Sustainability Excellence Associate and Professional credentials, the Urban Greenhouse Gas Inventory Specialist credential through the City Climate Planner program and several certificates. GBCI has received and maintained Personnel Certification accreditation from the American National Standards Institute since 2011. GBCI credentials require ongoing maintenance every two years. To learn more about [COMPANY]'s commitment to sustainable landscape design, development and management, visit [URL]. More information on the SITES AP is available at sustainablesites.org/sites-ap.

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Helpful Contacts

GBCI

Within the United States: 1-800-795-1746
Outside the United States: 1-202-828-1145
gbc.org/contact

Public Relations

Deisy Verdinez, PR & Communications Director
dverdinez@usgbc.org

Logo/Branding Use

marketing@gbc.org

Certification ceremony representative request

[Speaker Request Form](#)

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