Finland Embassy Platinum LEED Factsheet

- The embassy received LEED Gold in 2010 being the first diplomatic mission in the U.S. to earn the certification.

- The Platinum certification builds a unique transatlantic link, with the U.S. Embassy in Helsinki being the only other Platinum LEED Embassy in the world.

- The embassy got 89 points in the recertification. It is rare that existing buildings receive this many points in a recertification process.

- When the embassy was built 20 years ago environmental aspects were not as widely considered as they are today. However the architects used local materials and designed the building so that it would use as much natural daylight as possible.

- The greening process started in mid-2000s with simple measures like replacing all remaining T-12 bulbs with more energy-efficient T-8 light bulbs and LED lights.

- A significant step in the energy efficiency improvement process was the introduction of a free-cooling system that halved the use of electricity-powered cooling. In addition, several overlapping features of the heating and cooling systems were eliminated.

- The LEED process has had an effect on all aspects of the building's operations. The embassy has a rigorous green purchasing policy, toilets and faucets are fitted with water-saving devices, all cleaning supplies are environmentally sound and recycling is a major priority. In addition, the staff is encouraged to walk, ride bikes and use public transportation to travel to work instead of driving their own cars.

What we have done differently to achieve the LEED Platinum

- In order to achieve the LEED Platinum the embassy has carried on its green practices and policies.

- The building has succeeded in using even less energy through adjusting the operating times to correspond closely with the building's actual use and occupancy. For example in the summer time the cooling is switched off already at 5pm because the staff doesn't work all night. The heating and cooling system is not on during the weekends.

- The water faucets were replaced with even more water efficient ones that use only 0.5 gallons per minute (Federal Plumbing Standards specify that bathroom faucets should use no more than 2.2 gallons per minute). Also some showerheads were replaced and they now use 1.5 gallons per minute.

- The use of exterior lighting in the evenings was decreased.

- The property manager and his team monitor more closely the use of electricity, gas and water. Whenever the usage goes up, for example, if one of the toilets is broken and uses more water, the team finds a solution as quickly as possible.

- The embassy replaced the cooling tower supply and return temp censors as well as one of the air handling unit valve actuators so that the current air handling unit works more efficiently.

- The building automation system has been calibrated so that it works to its maximum capacity.

- The embassy has purchased Renewable Energy Credits which account for 100% of the total facility energy consumption.

- The embassy produces less waste than earlier. For example the embassy doesn't use any plastic cups, plates or cutlery at different receptions and tries to eliminate also food waste.

- The embassy composts leaves, grass and branches on the site of the building.

- The embassy has a well-functioning storm water system. This is a regional priority in the Washington D.C. area.

- The chemical treatment of the water in the free-cooling system was improved so that the system works better.

- The embassy hasn't purchased any new office furniture in five years. Instead the old furniture has been fixed and the embassy has purchased electronic table legs so that everybody can adjust their furnishing according to their own wishes.

- The embassy has purchased three Jopo bikes so that the staff can use these bikes instead of a taxi when travelling to different meetings. In addition, many of the diplomats share rides with their colleagues.

- The only new furniture that has been purchased is located in the sauna and it is 100% biodegradable.