

ABSTRACT

Since 2011, Landscape Architecture Foundation (LAF) has started to support a Case Study Investigation (CSI) program to systematically quantify performance of built landscape projects in the three environmental, economic, and social aspects. The goal of CSI is to test whether performance of landscape solutions fulfill designers' intentions and contribute toward achievement of sustainability. So far, about 76 cases are published including 39 cases from 2011 CSI program and 37 cases from 2012/2013 CSI programs. After publishing the 39 case studies in 2011, LAF realized that most cases have environmental benefits well documented, but fail to thoroughly quantify economic and social benefits. Therefore, in its 2012 and 2013 CSI programs, LAF requires research teams to particularly document economic and social benefits. Each case study should report a minimum of five performance benefits and there should be at least one of each type – environmental, economic, and social.

The purpose of this study is to examine whether this requirement transformed benefit composition in the 2012/2013 CSI case studies and to discuss how to improve the future CSI programs. In this study we compared the average total, economic, and social benefits of 2011 and 2012/2013 case studies. We also used a performance benefit composition scale to illustrate the relative ratio of each type of benefits. In addition, we compared the project type, size, location, and completion data of the 2011 and 2012/2013 cases, and also explored the influence of completion date on the benefit composition. The result shows that, in 2012/2013 cases studies, the average number of social benefits increased significantly, and the average number of economic benefits increased just slightly. More rural projects are included. The number of projects in different size categories is more balanced. As for the completion date, the 2011 and 2012/2013 cases are similar, and it seems to have no influence on benefit composition.