

Services – environmental product declarations (EPDs)

Because of the huge variability and complexity in LCA studies there has been a need to develop product category rules to define how the LCA should be conducted and reported. The intention is to use these product category rules (PCRs) to produce environmental product declarations (EPDs), which (in theory) allow for comparability between different products and materials, because the same rules have been followed.

In Europe, the PCRs for construction products are defined in the European Standard EN 15804. The most recent version of EN 15804 is:

EN 15804:2012+A2:2019 ‘Sustainability of construction works – Environmental product declarations – Core rules for the product category of construction products’

This standard was first published in 2012 and revised in 2019 to align the methods and reporting categories with the EU Product Environmental Footprint Product Category Rules. Subsequently, a minor change was made in 2021 to the freshwater eutrophication potential reporting characterisation factor in order to correct an error in the reporting units.

The standard provides a description of how to conduct an LCA in order to produce an Environmental Product Declaration (EPD) for products, or services for the built environment. The EPD can report the environmental information as a declared unit (a weight, volume, or quantity of material with specified dimensions), or as a functional unit (quantified performance of a product/service system for use as a reference unit).

The purpose of providing a standard that defines core product category rules describing how to conduct an LCA and report on the outcomes is to provide verifiable and consistent data for an EPD, based on LCA; as well as verifiable and consistent product-related technical data, or scenarios, for the assessment of environmental performance.

The purpose of the EN 15804 standard is to allow for communication of the environmental information of construction products/services from business to business; and, subject to additional requirements, for the communication of the environmental information of construction products/services to consumers.

An EPD is usually valid for five years and is produced according to the appropriate standards, and/or product category rules (PCRs) which are published by EPD program operators.

Once we have established appropriate confidentiality agreements and our quote has been accepted, we will start the process of data gathering to produce an inventory of materials and energy, transport and other parameters in order to construct an underlying LCA model. We work with you in a completely transparent way and communicate the progress of the development of the model (Excel-spreadsheet based) which we share with you. We do not use the ‘black box’ approach of providing you with data with no explanation. We work with use to develop the EPD template using an EPD program operator of your choice, or based on our recommendation. We will arrange for a third part verifier and do the registration for you if you wish. Our costs are separate from the third-party verifier fees and fees for the registration of EPD and your organisation with the EPD program operator. Our fees vary, depending on the complexity of the work involved.