

Development of Environmental Product Declarations

Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs) provide an easy-to-understand overview of the potential environmental impacts and energy usage data associated with products. For wood products, an EPD includes reportable impacts associated with harvesting, transportation, and manufacturing taken directly from individual product life-cycle assessment (LCA) reports produced for this purpose. Product manufacturers in the wood industry do not know how particular products might ultimately be used or disposed of, so “cradle-to-gate” EPDs that describe impacts from resource through mill manufacture are most relevant. Third-party verification of both underlying LCAs and resulting EPDs is optional; however, the wood industry has always chosen this option as a matter of good scientific practice.

Background

Current North American wood product EPDs were originally issued in 2013. These EPDs were produced from LCAs conducted in accordance with international standards ISO 14044 and ISO 21930, necessary to produce the data that are reproduced in an EPD. Once the original six were completed, the USDA Forest Products Laboratory (FPL) expressed an interest in expanding the number of available EPDs to include additional wood products. With this FPL support, the original six product EPDs were expanded to 11. Notably, the Product Category Rules (PCRs) that govern development of wood product EPDs require

their updating every five years. As a result, the original six wood product EPDs have reached the end of their prescribed validity and need to be regenerated in accordance with the current versions of PCR and LCA requirements and then be third-party verified for accuracy.

Objective

The object of this project is to develop revised EPDs for six products following production of new LCA reports that provide the necessary environmental and energy use data, followed by third-party verification.



Approach

The Consortium for Industrial Materials in Manufacturing (CORRIM) is currently updating all LCA reports for each of the products. Once these LCA reports are third-party verified, EPDs will be updated to reflect the latest potential environmental impacts.

Expected Outcomes

The research will result in current EPDs for six common structural wood products used in building construction. These EPDs are made widely available to the design community to allow better and informed product choices to be made in building design, underpinned by a standardized and globally accepted set of LCA environmental and energy data.

Timeline

The overall project has been ongoing and this next phase will begin following CORRIM's completion of the LCA reports expected in late 2016. Throughout 2017, each EPD will be updated and independently verified. The project is expected to conclude in late 2017 or early 2018.

Cooperators

USDA Forest Service, Forest Products Laboratory
American Wood Council

Contact Information

Richard Bergman
USDA Forest Service, Forest Products Laboratory
Madison, Wisconsin
(608) 231-9477; rbergman@fs.fed.us

Kenneth Bland
American Wood Council
Leesburg, Virginia
(202) 463-2765; kbland@awc.org

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